Date A Live Volume 8

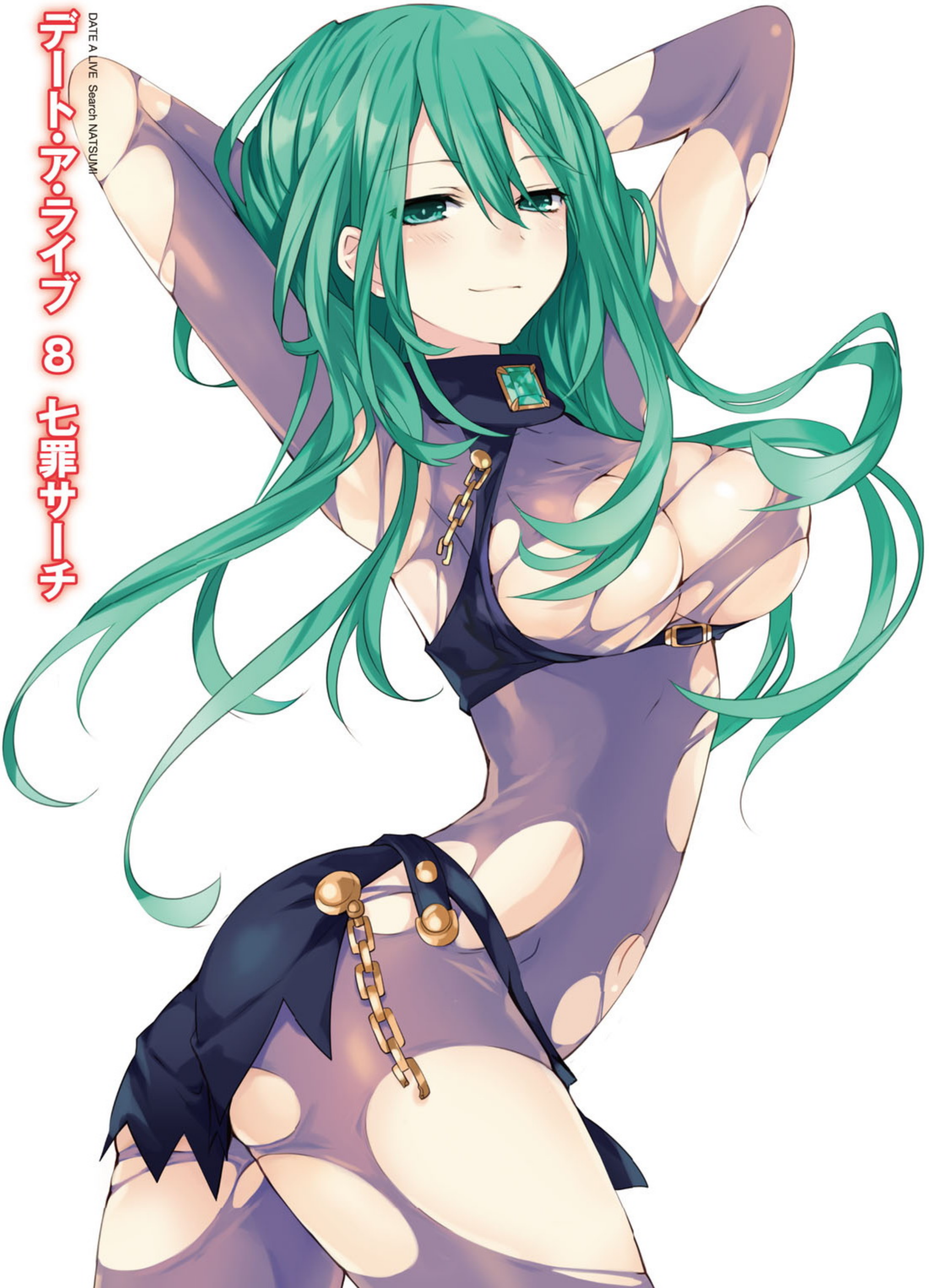
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These are novel illustrations that were included in **Volume 8 - Natsumi Search**


Search NATSUMI
SpiritNo.7
AstralDress-WitchType Weapon-BroomType[Haniel]
LIVE
ライブ
DATE
デート・ア・
A
七罪サーチ
橘公司
The author
Koushi Tachibana
08
ファンタジア文庫

DATE A LIVE Search NATSUMI

デート・ア・ライブ 8 七罪サーチ



「あ、ああ……すごく、綺麗だと思う」

高校生――五河士道（いつかしどう）

「そう！　わかってる！　士道くんわかってる!!」

第7の精霊――七罪（なつみ）

「いや～、見事な胸だな。天然物は揉み心地が違う」

「なッ、ななななななな……何をしているのだーっ！」

精霊――十香（とおか）

「何言ってんの夕弦!?　そんなこと言ったらあんただって……！」

精霊――八舞耶倶矢（やまいかぐや）

「首肯。その通りです。士道好き耶倶矢が見間違えるはずがありません」

精霊――八舞夕弦（やまいゆづる）

「七罪は――おまえだ」

「な、なんなんですかこれは……っ！
もういやですっ！
帰してくださいい……っ！」

精霊――美九（みく）

「ふむ……」

「一体、これは
どういうこと」

士道のクラスメイト
――鳶一折紙（とびいちおりがみ）

「そ、そんな、まさか……」

〈ラタトスク〉司令官――五河琴里（いつかことり）



「と、トリック・オア・トリート……っ」

精霊――四糸乃（よしの）

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精霊
THE SPIRIT

隣界に存在する特殊災害指定生命体。発生原因、存在理由ともに不明。
こちらの世界に現れる際、空間震を発生させ、周囲に甚大な被害を及ぼす。
また、その戦闘能力は強大。

対処法1
WAYS OF COPING 1

武力を以てこれを殲滅する。
ただし前述の通り、非常に高い戦闘能力を持つため、達成は困難。

対処法2
WAYS OF COPING 2

――デートして、デレさせる。

七罪サーチ

Search NATSUMI

SpiritNo.7
AstralDress-WitchType　Weapon-BroomType [Haniel]

Prologue: Another Shidou

"Wha……?"

On top of the school roof.

Shidou froze in confusion as he stared at the young man that stood in front of him.

The reason was simple. The young man's figure looked extremely bizarre.

Even so, its was not like he had a scary face. If an unrelated person were to look at him, they would only get the image of a very ordinary young man.

He had hair that hung to his eyes and manly facial features. He had a medium build and wore the Raizen high school's winter uniform.

It was not like there was anything weird about him. He was just an ordinary young man.

However, Shidou was horrified. He gulped, moving closer to take a better look at the man.

"You…… who on earth are you?"

"……Who am I? What are you saying?"

The young man shrugged his shoulders as he replied to Shidou's question.

Then the side of his lips rose up while he continued.

"--------It's me, Itsuka Shidou. Can't you tell from looking?"

The young man smiled happily.

"……."

Shidou raised his eyebrows unintentionally at the bizarre young man.

Yes. The young man that stood in front of Shidou was someone with the exact same face as him.

The young man eyed playfully at Shidou, before moving his mouth to breath out a sigh.

"----------You really don't know? It's *me.*"

"……!?"

Hearing the young man's voice, Shidou once again raised his eyebrows.

That was because the voice was not Shidou's, but a female's.

No, that was not all, Shidou had heard that voice before...

“Don’t tell me…… Natsumi……!?”

Shidou called out that name, and the young man made a grin.

“------Fufu, correct. You finally realized, Shidou-kun.”

“Wha, what is with that form!? What kind of reason……?”

As Shidou inquired of her, Natsumi unexpectedly distorted her expression.

“What kind of reason, you say? Didn’t I say it before? I will not let someone who knows my secret go that easily. Prepare yourself, for I will beat you into a broken pulp……!”

Natsumi said detestably and *Pi!* pointed her thumbs downwards.

Chapter 1: Witch of October

Part 1

"Ufufu--. Hey, darling. Its okay to come closer you know? Here "

"No……. Listen here, Miku."

"What is it--? Ah, oh yeah. I found a delicious Italian shop just recently. Do you have plans this evening? Let's go together if it is okay with you."

"Ah, no, I have to make dinner for Tohka and the rest……."

"I see---, then let's go together with Tohka-chan and the rest. I am not a narrow-minded woman you know? Of course it is my treat, so do not worry."

"No, That's why, Miku……"

Looking towards the girl who was pushing her body onto his while making an innocent smile, Itsuka Shidou made a troubled face.

Having bluish-purple glamorous hair like silk threads and smooth skin that has never missed maintenance. She was without a doubt a beautiful girl.

This girl called Izayoi Miku, is one year older than Shidou in terms of school grades but, unlike normal seniors, he was currently looking at a child-like speech patterns.

But even so, her body side was properly growing and since her voluptuous bust were being pushed at Shidou each time she moves, he has no idea what to do. Greasy sweats were popping out around Shidou's face while he had no other choice not to look at her in the eyes.

Nonetheless, Miku's innocent approach wasn't the only thing right now that was making him rigid.

"……."

Stare-- such a sight was entangling Shidou's whole body.

……..Yes. Shidou's sister Itsuka Kotori was, sitting right in front of Shidou and Miku.

She was a characteristic girl with her hair tied into two sides with a black ribbon, round eyes that look like an acorn, and Chupa Chups being held in her mouth. Right now she was having her crimson jacket riding on her shoulders while resting her chin on one hand and gazing at Shidou and Miku's one-sided flirting in a bad mood.

Right now Shidou and the rest were currently inside a room in the airship <Fraxinus>.

It was a dim space as if it was trying to squeeze out the lighting intentionally. The chairs Shidou and Miku were sitting on were placed in the center, and long tables were lined up around their surroundings. It had the aspect of a nerve-wracking interview hall or maybe a courthouse……. Well, Miku looks like she doesn't really mind though.



"……..is it okay any time now, Miku"

"Eh? What do you mean by any time?"

When Miku said that with a face that shows no bad intentions, Kotori ground her teeth and slammed the table.

"That. Is. Why!! I am talking about information gathering! Didn' t you say [I don't want to if I am not together with darling] so we specially allowed you to sit together with him!"

"Aah, now that you mention it, that's right."

ahaha Miku laughed and looked back at Kotori. But, her hand was still entangling Shidou's arm.

Haa Kotori made a big sigh before, flipping through the document placed near her hands.

"……..then, I will be moving to the questions."

"Okay okay, with pleasure---go ahead."

Miku said in a relaxed tone. Kotori spilled out one more sigh before continuing her words.

"Regarding about your ability, your angel, I have a lot of things I want to ask but……. I'll bring them back later for now. First off, the thing I have to confirm no matter what is-------"

After saying that, Kotori pointed her fingers at Miku.

"-------The existence that made you a Spirit."

"……..!"

The moment when Kotori said that, Miku's slacken cheeks twitched.

"You aren't a genuine Spirit, but originally a human------there is no mistake there right?"

"……..."

Hearing Kotori words, Miku raised her eyebrows a little and made a painful expression. And somehow, Shidou felt that her breathing was getting wilder.

For an instant, he thought……. there were various circumstances on why she couldn't answer Kotori's question but, he immediately thought back.

The time when Miku became a Spirit. That was when Miku was disappointed in humans and felt despair to the world. Most likely she might be hesitating to put the events that happened during that time in her mouth.

"Are you okay, Miku? If it is tough for you, you could rest first before-----"

"No, I am okay."

When Shidou said that, Miku swung her head sideways.

"I have darling. Including everything in the past, I decided to move forward."

"Miku……."

After Shidou made a gentle pat on her back as if to push her, Miku made a nod.

"……..yes. That is correct. A few months before now……. .I was betrayed by everyone. I lost my voice in a psychogenesis-type aphonia and in front of me who has lost all hope to live-------[God] appeared."

After Miku said that, he felt Kotori's sight turned slightly sharper. Shidou also slightly brought his eyebrows together.

But Miku, in a manner of not noticing Kotori and Shidou's state, she continued talking.

"[Hey, do you want power? Do you want a power big enough to change the world?]. [God] said that to me, and brought out a shining violet gem-like object to me. And then, when I extended my hands to receive it, that gem entered my body as if it was melting……. And in the next instant, I obtained a devilish [Voice] which can make anyone do as I say—"

"I see."

Kotori groaned in a difficult face, and made the rod of the Chupa Chups stand up in her mouth.

"Please tell me everything as much as possible regarding that [God] or whatever."

"Even if you say, everything……."

In a bind, Miku made her eyebrows look like a 八 kanji[8A 1].

"I somehow felt it was mysterious. It's true that it was there but, I recognize its image with noises placed on it. It's true I heard the voice, but even though I understood the content, I have completely no idea what kind of voice it was.---------somehow, I feel its existence itself has a mosaic placed on it……."

"……I see."

Kotori made a small sigh while saying that. Nonetheless, she didn't look that much disappointed. Most likely, she probably somewhat predicted Miku's reaction.

"Then, I am changing the question. After gaining the Spirit powers, has there been a time when you get attacked by destructive impulses or have your ego corroded away?"

"Destructive impulse……..you say. No, there isn't any occasion of that happening that comes to mind……."

"Fuun."

Kotori distorted her eyebrows while writing something in the documents near her hands.

"Kotori, that's……..."

When Shidou said that, Kotori [Yes] showed consent.

"I think, maybe the same case that happened with us occurred with Miku too.---------but, I wonder why. Maybe the nature is different from the type of Reiryoku, or maybe the problem is with the individual's aptitude…… or maybe, <Phantom> got the hang of giving Reiryoku to humans from that time with me? Haah, if by any chance that is the case then, it is not something we can stand for being used as lab rats."

Shrugging her shoulders, she said it in detest. Shidou also ground his teeth and clenched his fist.

<Phantom>. An existence that gave Miku and Kotori Reiryoku, and turning them into Spirits.

Is it a Spirit, a human, or maybe another species. Why does it have the ability to turn humans into Spirits, on what reason it is doing so-------that [Something] is just like the word phantom and everything about it is wrapped in mystery.

"Mu----"

And, when Shidou was immersing himself in thoughts, his arms was suddenly pulled. When he looked over, Miku *puu* was puffing her cheeks.

"Please stop ignoring me and go pondering with only the two of you in it."

"Aah……. Sorry, sorry."

After Shidou made a wry smile, Kotori made a cough to re-think.

"I am sorry. But don't worry. The information gathering has just begun. I will properly hear detailed explanations from now on. We can't throw away the chances of your memories being manipulated by <Phantom> so, let's attach electrodes on your head to see your brain waves a little okay--?"

Kotori made a smile. In contrastive when she did that, Miku made an unpleasant face and let sweat run down her cheeks.

---In the end, it was around when the evening sun dyed the surroundings when Miku was released from Kotori.

Being teleported in front of the Itsuka family house by < Fraxinus>'s teleporter, Miku was staggering in exhaustion and was being supported by Shidou

"O-oioi, are you okay?"

"Uh, I am tired……."

Saying that, Miku made a big sigh.

"……. Somehow, I feel like diving straight into my futon[8A2] after going back home today……. Darling, I am sorry but, about that shop, can we leave that for next time?"

"Eh? Aah, I don't mind……"

After Shidou said that, Miku joined her hands around her chest and *Paaa* her face turned lively.

"Hnn, Mouu, darling is too kind."

Maintaining that posture, she pushed her body tighter to him.

"O-oi, you are an idol so, isn't this kind of stuff bad……"

When Shidou face turned red while looking away, Miku made a surprised face for an instant.

Yes. The girl currently innocently hugging Shidou right now, Izayoi Miku is an idol who holds a miracle voice and is a person who is quite famous.

Since she was active as a singer hiding her identity for a long time, her face wasn't quite known but……thanks to the television appearance ban being lifted a few months ago, right now her face is being shown throughout Japan. If this defenseless state has been exposed, a scandal picture might be taken in an instant.

However Miku *Nii* raised the side of lips as if she saw through Shidou's thoughts.

"Fufu, that sort of thing is okay. If there is paparazzi hiding, I will give them a peace or sight service. Whether it is Friday or Sunday, bring it on---"

"……. No, I think Sunday is okay tough……"

When Shidou made a wry smile, Miku [Fufu] showed a smile.

"Darling, you said this right? Even if no one hears my songs, darling will be the only one that will be my fan. That's why…… ……it is okay. If darling is beside me then, I don't mind if anything happens."

"Aah……..that's right."

After Shidou stared back at Miku, he slightly lowered his head forward.

Maybe from looking at Shidou's reaction, Miku made a satisfied smile, and let go from Shidou's body.

"Well then, it's about time I excuse myself for today. I look forward to meeting again, darling."

"Aah, see you."

"Yes---. Then……..."

Suddenly, Miku wrapped both her hands around Shidou's neck , and [Hnn--] thrust her lips forward.

"Wha……..!? Wha-wha-wha-what are you doing, Miku……!?"

"Eeh? What……it's a good bye kiss though……..."

"N-no, just because you aren't afraid of scandals, isn't this weird?"

"Uun, moou, you are such a shy person. It is okay--. Come now."

"O-oi, wait a sec……"

Miku inserted strength in both her hands. Shidou's face was brought forward against his will-----

"Ah--! What are the both of you doing!"

From the sudden loud voice coming from the right side, he twitched his shoulders.

Shidou and Miku both faced towards the direction the voice came from at the same time. Over there, there was a girl with her hands trembling while looking at them with her eyes wide open.

She has night color long wavy hair behind her shoulders, and beautiful crystal eyes. Someone might never forget about her once they see her as she is a peerless beauty.

Yatogami Tohka. Shidou's classmate and neighbor. And also-----just like Miku, a Spirit which has her Reiryoku formerly sealed

by Shidou. Since it was about time for dinner, she probably came over to the Itsuka family house.

"To-tohka!"

"Oh my, Tohka-san. Long time no see."

Miku said that in a cheerful tone. When she did that, Tohka walked over heavily and pulled Shidou away from Miku. And then, as if to protect Shidou, she spread both her hands and stood between them.

"Are you okay, Shidou! Damn you Miku. I heard you corrected yourself, but what were you planning!?"

After Tohka made a sharp glare, 3 new footsteps could be heard coming from the direction Tohka came from.

"Fuun, nice guts for you to bear your fangs to Shidou who is my and Yuzuru's shared property. Understood, why don't we carefully teach you the scariness of the Yamai's!"

"Warning. During the occasion of approaching Shidou, please submit an application document with the explanation written down towards Yuzuru and Kaguya who have the rights to his ownership."

After saying that, the identical twins, made a stance towards Miku.

It was Kaguya who has a characteristic unyielding face and hairs tied up, and Yuzuru who has 3 long braided hairs and she

gives a blank expression impression. The only ways to differentiate the both of them were their hair style and expression…….. well, if the sight was lowered a little downwards, the hopeless difference of body figure could be recognized.

A soft voice could be heard next coming from behind them.

"So-something like that in the middle of the road……is bad I think……"

Saying it like that, the cheeks of the petite girl with a hat covering her eyes--------Yoshino blushed. And at the same time, [Yoshinon] the rabbit puppet equipped on her left hand, *Paku** Paku* opened its mouth and clattered.

"Nee—it's no good you know--. Yoshino has not tried that kind of pattern yet so--. Snatching is a nono—"

"Yo-Yoshinon……..!"

Yoshino covered [Yoshinon]'s mouth in panic. [Yoshinon] waved both its hands in pain.

Speaking of which, since Yoshino who was living inside < Fraxinus>'s quarantine space gotten used to a normal lifestyle, she was also moved to one room in the mansion a few days ago.

The Yamai sisters and Yoshino. These girls are Spirits the same with Tohka---------and have a slight relation with Miku.

Yes. Last month, they had the experience of having their body and mind controlled by Miku's manifested angel. Maybe because of that, it looks like they still have a slight wariness towards Miku.

However, the Miku in question didn't really mind much and [Well] her eyes were sparkling.

"Long time no see, Yoshino-chan, Kaguya-chan, and Yuzuru-chan. I am sorry about last time. I wanted to apologized to all of you once."

After saying that, she lowered her head. Maybe because they were bewildered from such a reaction, the 3 of them were looking at each other in perplexion.

But, Tohka didn't release her wariness even though she saw Miku's action and continued standing in front of Shidou.

"So, what are your intentions? What were you trying to do to Shidou just now!"

"Eh? It's a good bye kiss though? Doesn't Tohka-san usually do that?"

"Go-goodbye……kiss?"

Tohka raised her eyebrows in a perplexed feeling and turned around to Shidou.

"……. Is it something done, normally?"

Tohka asked in doubt. He could not stand having it become a misunderstanding. Shidou swing his heads sideways.

“Is-isn’t that a lie! Kissing when saying goodbye, that kind of thing is--------“

“Eeh--, isn’t it dreamy? How about Tohka-chan try it out?”

“”””””Wha…….!?”””””””

Shidou, Tohka as well as Yoshino and the Yamai sisters gasped when they heard Miku's words when she was taken back.

But, Miku made a surprised face from our unexpected reactions and immediately *pon* hit her hands together as if she thought of something.

“I know! I thought of something good! I will kiss darling first. From there, I who kissed darling will kiss Tohka-san. How about that? Killing two birds with one stone! Isn’t it ground-breaking!?”

“Wh-why do I have to kiss with you!?”

“Eh? That’s because, doesn’t that mean I will be kissing darling just before you?”

“Mu……..umu”

“Which means, isn’t it the same as Tohka-san kissing with darling?”

“Muu……I-I see…….”

"No, don't 'I see' me."

After he said that to stop Tohka who was close to being convinced, Tohka immediately shook her shoulders.

"Cu-curse you Miku! You took me as a fool didn't you!"

"I have not thought of such things. ……..ah! Then let's do this. First off I and Tohka-san will kiss, then I will kiss darling--. Tohka-san's hot feelings, I will properly send it to darling."

"Wha…..!?"

"Hnn---"

Miku joined her hands near her chest as if to pray and thrust her lips towards Tohka after closing her eyes. Tohka moved her head left and right flustered, and ran away from that spot.

"Aan, why are you running away. Please wait for me."

"Do-don't follow me!"

After saying that with a screaming-like voice, Tohka ran towards Yoshino and the group's direction.

"Kya……."

"Yo-you idiot! Don't come over here!"

"Shiver. Let's run, Kaguya."

Every mouth said that, and everyone ran away from Miku.

“Aah, Moou, if this is the case, leave everything to me everyone!”

“””Waaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa!”””

“Ha-haha…….”

Looking at Miku who looks happy from the bottom of her heart chasing after everyone, Shidou made a powerless smile.

How do you put this------ it feels as if she jumped through the antagonism and ties against her, and smashed into everyone in a relative simple way.

Part 2

“Fumu…….”

After Shidou and Miku returned to the ground. Kotori was touching her chin with her hand while compiling the talk she had with Miku just now inside the <Fraxinus> office.

In front of the screen deployed in front of her, it was displaying the results from Miku’s voice recording data. She was checking it numerous times while compiling it in an entry and was creating a document to submit to the Rounds.

Originally, these types of jobs were tasks left to the other organization members. But, only for the mystery filled <Phantom>

, Kotori has to personally work on it since she has met <Phantom> directly.

Miku is the only person aside from Shidou and Kotori that has encountered <Phantom>. As long as every corner of her words has the potential to contain hidden information that can bring them closer to <Phantom>'s identity, she could not leave it to the other organization members.

"The purple sapphire given to Miku……., how many sapphires does <Phantom> have……. If it can produce an unlimited amount of them then------"

While chasing after the words with her eyes and tampering with the console, she was mumbling to herself.

And, at that moment.

"Hyaa!?"

Suddenly a cold object touched her cheeks and Kotori let out a high-pitched voice.

"Wha-what is it, seriously……..!"

When she raised her face from surprise, appearing out of nowhere, she saw a girl that was around the same age as Kotori standing there handing a coffee can to her.

Having her hair tied in one part, she was an impressive girl that has a mole under her left eye. She somehow has a similar atmosphere with Shidou.

"Being enthusiastic is good but, don't you think you are going at it too much?"

After saying that, the girl--------Takamiya Mana made a smile.

"……. I know that even if you don't tell me."

She replied back in a disappointed tone, and received the coffee handed to her. She opened the cold can, and when she poured down the fluids inside it in one go, a bittersweet adult-like flavor expanded through her tongue.

"So, what is wrong? Is there any progress?"

"……. Sadly none. We only know that <Phantom> that appeared in front of us 5 years ago, and that [Something] that got in contact with Miku, are most likely the same existence---------"

In the middle of her words, Kotori twitched her eyebrows.

"……anyway, why are you in a place like this?"

"Heh?"

When Kotori said that with half her eyes open, Mana tilted her head in wonder.

"What do you mean by why; I entered from the front entrance like normal. Hoora, if even something like that was unnoticed, that is the proof of you being tired. Take a little rest------"

"Not that! You! I thought I told you to rest! Even under normal circumstances your body is worn-out, you were that reckless…… …….!"

Kotori slammed the table and shouted.

Yes. Although Takamiya Mana currently is under the protection of <Ratatoskr>, she was a wizard belonging to the DEM industries' 2nd executive group. During that time, her whole body had magic treatment placed in it and in exchange for gaining strong powers, her body was carved with a serious sacrifice.

"I told you before. If you immediately take treatment from the experts in <Ratotoskr>, you might be able to lengthen your lifespan even if it is a little! But even so……..!"

"N-no well, that's true. A-ahahaha……. Then, I'll better get going……."

Mana made a smile as if she was punished and was about to run away. After Kotori stood up from the chair, she pushed her body to Mana to stop from advancing.

---Putting it in accurate words, she was burying her face into Mana's back and hugged her tightly.

"Ko-Kotori-san?"

"……Thank you. If you weren't in <Fraxinus> at that time, I don't know what could have happened."

"……"

After Mana quietly looked back, *Pon**Pon* she gently patted Kotori's head.

"That goes to both of us.------even I was saved by you. Paying you back as fast as possible would make me feel relieved."

After saying that, Mana lifted the side of her lips.

Kotori then lightly wiped of the tears oozing out, and *fufu* shrugged her shoulders.

"……..how should I put this, you really are Shidou's sister. I am a little envious."

"Heh?"

"Nothing. ----------but..."

After Kotori brought her eyebrows together, *Tightly* she added strength in both her arms and tightly hold on to Mana's body.

"I am thankful for your actions. But, this and that is different. I' ll have you properly go to the experts and receive treatment."

"N-no but see, I really have to chase after <Nightmare>. There is no one else to be her opponent than me……..."

"It's true that Kurumi's investigation is an urgent matter but, aren't you in a more problematic matter compared to that…… !"

"E-err, Kotori-san? Your cute face is turning into something very scary though……."

Mana made a stiff smile while bending her body a little. Kotori inserted more strength in order to not let Mana get away.

And, at that time. When something was displayed out of the display deployed on top of Kotori's office desk, a voice echoed out from the speaker.

"-----Commander Itsuka. There is a transmission coming from headquar---tteers……..!?"

Appearing inside the window, the <Fraxinus> crew Shiizaki twitched her shoulders. It was as if she saw something she should not have seen.

Like that, Kotori [Ah] made that sound. Just as they can see Shiizaki's face, Shiizaki should be able to see the situation here too. And right now, Kotori and Mana were right in the middle of exchanging a passionate hug. If she suddenly saw only this situation, then it was a scene that would cause a lot of misunderstandings.

After Kotori let go of Mana in panic, she looked back at the screen.

"Don't misunderstand! I only did that to catch Mana from running away-----"

Released from Kotori's restraints, Mana ran off in lightning speed. Although Kotori extended her hands to grab the nape of her neck once more------ but it was too late. Mana slipped past Kotori's hands with magnificent body handling and exited the office.

"Ah, you little…….! I will have you take the treatment once you come back!"

"I'll think about it!"

Mana said that while swinging her hands. And at the same time , the sound of the office room's automatic door closing was produced.

"Seriously, that girl……."

After Kotori scratched her head, she sat down on the chair and looked back at the screen.

"…….so, what is it? From the headquarters?"

"Ah, Ye-yes. There is a transmission sent to commander through using the hidden line. Should I connect it?"

"Yes, I am counting on you."

"Roger"

Saying like that, Shiizaki operated the console. When she did that, Shiizaki's face disappeared from the screen and in exchange another person was displayed. She was someone she met several

times already; one of the <Ratatoskr>'s round chairman Elliot Woodman's secretary.

"I am sorry for calling in when you are busy, Commander Itsuka."

"I don't mind. What's the matter, suddenly.."

"Err, actually, sir Woodman is-------"

The secretary made a slightly unpleasant face while continuing.

Part 3

15th October, Sunday. It is the time when the city's ornaments were filled with Halloween mode. Shidou and Tohka were heading towards the shopping district to buy ingredients for dinner.

"Ooh…….. Shidou, what is that?"

While saying that, Tohka pointed towards the giant pumpkin ghost decorated in front of the general store.

"Aah, that's a Jack O' lantern. It is made from extracting the pumpkin. Well, that isn't a real pumpkin but plastic one though."

"Pumpkin? That ghost is an orange color you know? Isn't a pumpkin green?"

"Aah, Japan's are mostly green in color; there are those types of pumpkins overseas."

"What……. If it is that big then, it looks like there would be leftovers even after making it into tempura, soup and boiled dishes."

Tohka was opening her eyes wide in admiration while nodding.

Well, he felt that he heard this type of pumpkin used for the Jack O' lantern is not really used for eating and is normally used for enjoyment but……. There was no reasons to crush Tohka's dream.

"Hn---, since we are at it, let's buy a pumpkin on our way back for tonight's dinner. There should be minced meat remaining if I remember correctly, so let's make it either minced and boiled or in croquette."

"Oooh!"

Tohka's eyes were sparkling while *Pun**pun she was swinging her hands.

"Umu, I think that is great! However, I understand it minced and boiled but, croquette……..? Isn't croquette made from potato? "

"Normally that is the case. It is sweet and delicious when it is made from pumpkin."

After saying that, Tohka closed her eyes for a few moments as if to imagine the taste and *Gulp* she drank her saliva down.

"……..umu, let's have croquette today! Okay then now that is decided, let's go Shidou!"

With that said Tohka pointed towards the greengrocer and walked in big paces.

"O-oi, it's dangerous if you walk without looking in front-----"

And, around the time Shidou said that, Tohka collided into the human shadow that came out from the side road and fell on her butt just like that.

"Unuu!"

"Ooto……"

"Aaahmou, didn't I say so. Hoora, are you okay?"

"Mu…….umu"

After helping Tohka to stand up, he turned back towards the human shadow that collided with Tohka just now.

Over there was a male around 50 years old sitting on a wheelchair and the one pushing him was a woman wearing glasses who looks like she was in her mid-twenties.

"I am very sorry for not paying attention. Are you injured? Hoora, Tohka too."

"Mu……..sorry. I didn't look in front."

Tohka lowered her head apologetically. When she did that, the man swung his head while making a gentle smile and talked in fluent Japanese that does not match his face.

"No, I am sorry too. Are you okay, Ojou-san[8A 3]?"

"Umu, I am okay."

"That is good. If such a cute lady like you is injured, then I might fall into hell."

The man said that in a humorous tone. To bring out that line so smoothly, he was without doubt a play boy in his younger days. Shidou secretly thought, *I should learn from that*. ……..well, Tohka in question, her cheeks weren't blushing but rather she was staring blankly.

And, as Shidou was thinking about that, the man hit his hand as if he remembered something.

"Now that I think about it, there is something I wanted to ask. You two, do you know where the public hospital is?"



"Hospital……..? Aah, if that is the case, you should be able to see it after going straight to the shopping district. Once you come out to the road, head left, then turn right after the 3rd traffic light and head straight ahead."

After Shidou said that, the man *umu* wring his head.

"I don't really get it……sorry but, can you lead me until there?"

Shidou scratched his cheeks. He and Tohka still have stuff to buy from now on but…….. Well, it's not that far away and he doesn't mind if it is that much.

"It's okay. It's this way."

With that said, he walked as if to cross through the shopping district.

"Sorry about this. The Japanese really are kind people. I am thankful."

"No, this is not much. Eeer------"

"Aah, call me Baldwin. She is Karen."

While saying that, the man-----Baldwin pointed his thumb towards the woman pushing his wheelchair. Then, the woman called Karen [Nice to meet you] replied with only that and returned back to being silent.

She was a pale Nordic blonde with blue eyes. Wondering why------ this was supposed to be his first time meeting her, but Shidou felt he saw the woman called Karen somewhere before.

"Is something wrong?"

"Ah, no……..I am Itsuka Shidou."

"I am Yatogami Tohka."

When Shidou and Tohka said that, Baldwin nodded in a good mood.

"Umu, I really have to be thankful to God for meeting a wonderful couple in a different country."

"Buu……!"

"Nu……?"

From those words, Shidou unintentionally spurt out. Maybe she did not understand Baldwin's words, or she was feeling suspicious of Shidou's reaction, Tohka tilted her head.

"Is something wrong Shidou-kun?"

"I-it's not like we are a couple……."

"Oyaa, was I mistaken? I am sorry."

Baldwin shrugged his shoulders as Shidou wiped off the sweat oozing out from his forehead.

But, behind Shidou, Tohka poked his back.

"Shidou. What is a couple?"

"Eh…….!? No, that is……"

When Shidou was having trouble, Baldwin faced his sights towards Tohka in interest.

"Tohka-san. How long has it been since you met Shidou-kun?"

"Mu? Let's see……around half a year."

"I see. Which means it is around April. It is around the enrollment ceremony and opening ceremony in Japan. Did you meet there?"

"No. I met Shidou during the space quake-----"

"Waah!"

Shidou, raised a loud voice to interrupt Tohka's honest words.

Tohka noticed at that moment. She immediately opened her eyes wide and continued her words to trick him.

"Tha-that's wrong. A space quake is a space quake but, that, I wasn't the reason for it but, err……."

"Kuh, during the space quake, we met in the shelter right!"

"U-umu! That's it!"

When Shidou said that, Tohka changed over and consented.

It looked like was done a little on purpose but, well as far as it goes the reason should be able to pass through. In fright, Shidou looked towards Baldwin.

Without a suspicious face, Baldwin was staring at the both of their conversation with only a smile. It would seem they succeeded in tricking him. Shidou patted his chest.

But, how should this be put, on Baldwin's expression, there was this awkwardness as if he guessed everything regarding this side's situation.

"I see. That's like fate."

After Baldwin slowly took his time, he made an emotive sigh before continuing his words.

"------Tohka-san. Right now, are you happy?"

"Nu?"

From the sudden question, Tohka opened her eyes wide. However, Tohka didn't make a particular doubtful face and made a big nod in front.

"Umu, I am very happy now!"

"Is that so?"

Baldwin said that, and made a gentle smile.

And-----at that moment.

UUUU

"E-err! Baldwin-san! It is dangerous here. Please evacuate quickly!"

"Aah, I plan on doing so. What about you?"

"Eh? I-I, err, I have something to do so……"

When Shidou became flustered while answering, Baldwin shrugged his shoulders and smiled.

"Well, I suppose that was a malicious question to ask. I pray for the fortune to be able to meet again. --------Do your best. I am leaving the spirit to you."

"Eh…….?"

From Baldwin's words, Shidou raised his eyebrows and squeezed his throat.

However he did not reply back anything and after giving an order to Karen, they went back to the road they came from.

"Shidou, what are you doing?"

"A-aah……."

Being told by Tohka, after Shidou released his sights from Baldwin and Karen, he took out the Incam hidden in his pocket and equipped it to his right ear to contact <Fraxinus>.

"What would you like to do now.--------it looks like there were several contacts from Commander Itsuka."

Right after separating from Itsuka Shidou and Yatogami Tohka, Karen who was pushing the wheelchair asked Baldwin.

"Haha, I made them worried. But even so the <Fraxinus> will be busy since there is a space quake. Let's quietly evacuate for now . ------aah, and, if I am correct there is a DEM member that was captured during that time with <Berserk>. Since we came to Japan, let's talk with him a little."

"Understood. I will have that arranged."

Karen said that in an indifferent tone. Baldwin made a small nod.

"------So, is there any problems with them?"

"From what I can see, there shouldn't be a problem for now. They are very stable."

"I see. That is good."

After saying that, *Fuu* she sighed.

Last month. The spirit that had [Inverse] and the boy who manifested several angels, Itsuka Shidou.

Naturally, he received the analysis result report, but as expected he had to meet them directly to erase the worries he had.

But, those worries were just needless anxiety. The voice he heard from Tohka a while ago was being remembered as if it was bouncing about and he loosened the side of his lips.

“----I am really glad to have come to Japan. She really looked happy."

Saying it like that, he---------Elliot Baldwin Woodman made a small smile.

Part 4

“This……how should I put this, it's distasteful…….”

Being teleported to the spot the Space quake occurred by the < Fraxinus>, Shidou looked at the surrounding scenery and sweat oozed out from his cheeks on reflex.

A big range coming up to around 1 kilometer in diameter, a round shape was scraped off as if it was a beautiful prepared soil. Space Quake. The name was taken from the earthquake-esque distortion in space and its outbreak nature forming its characteristics.

But, Shidou was looking at that disaster's after-effects right now .

At the south side of the vanished mark of the Space quake. Over there, there were some weird structures lined up.

The jet coaster paused half-way in the middle of the sky and a merry-go-round with horses with no head. There were Coffee Cups with cracks on it and a partially destroyed mirror house.

It was covered with rust from some time ago and it is something that could not be done by the space quake just now.

Yes. The place Shidou was sent to with the teleporter was the demolished amusement park placed outside Tenguu city.

The official name is unknown. Even when the nearby residence is asked, it would only be called [Ghost land]. It seems it was an established facility that barely escaped the southern Kantou sky disaster 30 years ago, but naturally after the disaster the number of visitors decreased rapidly---------rather, it was close to no-one and it became abandoned in a blink of an eye.

On top of that, since it did not suffer any direct space quakes, subsidiary payments for its redevelopment were not given and it remains here while staring at the insides of Tenguu city being continuously developed; this was such a pitiful place.

Even though there was space quake this time, the damage radius was only piled on top the amusement park ground and the rusted attractions were left there as it is.

It was coupled with the evening time period and it created a very eerie scenery. It was like the amusement park was no more than a minor role and its whole facility was encroached by the ghost house expanding its territory.

"The atmosphere is coming out a little too much……."

"Don't keep complaining."

And when Shidou was making a bitter face while muttering that, Kotori's voice could be heard coming from the Incam equipped in his right ear.

"The appeared Spirit has moved west from the space quake occurrence point. The AST should be reaching the spot soon. Please get in contact with her before any unnecessary disruption occurs."

"I got it……."

After Shidou made a small nod, he pointed his toes towards south-------the amusement park that turned into ruins.

Honestly, he wasn't really up for it but now wasn't the time for him to say that. Even though he strikes with the first move, the AST------Anti-Spirit Team is probably immediately heading

towards this spot. Before that happens, he has to talk with the Spirit as much as possible.

But-------Shidou who was running in the ruins, suddenly stopped his legs.

"……huh?"

He made a dumbfounded voice and stood rock still.

"Hey? What are you doing? The spirit's reading is further----------"

Saying suspiciously, Kotori also stopped her words mid-way. Most likely, she probably saw the same scenery Shidou did with the automated camera.

Yes. In a certain fixed point, the amusement park that was turned into a ruin was lined up with distorted gothic structures and cross gravestones that had transformed it into a very disgusting looking place.

"Wha-what is……this?"

From the strange feeling of getting sucked into a comedy horror movie created from using latest CG effects or a visual type[8A 4] PV , Shidou instinctively pinched his cheeks. Naturally, a sharp pain ran down Shidou's face.

"The amusement park's attraction came back to life…… …. There's no way that can be right……"

"-------Yes. While it's weak, there are reiha[8A 5] readings around. I am not sure about the details, but it is most likely related to the spirit's ability."

Having her calmness regained, Kotori said that. Shidou gazed at the weird scenery expanding nearby and gulped.

----------and.

"Araan?"

When Shidou was standing rock still in bewilderment, a voice could be heard from upwards.

He sprung his face upwards. When he did that, on top of the church's ceiling rising in front of his eyes, he saw a weird silhouette.

There was a girl sitting on the cross there while facing her back towards the orange evening sun.

He could not see in details because of the back lighting but-------he could clearly see she was wearing a characteristic hat.

The hat had wide visors and a fractured cone on the tip.

Yes. It was as if----------the [witch] that appears inside stories.

"Ufufu, this is rare, to think I would meet another human other than the AST when I am *pulled over* here."

The spirit giggled and *Pyon* jumped off the cross.

And while lightly floating mid-air, she landed right in front of Shidou.

She was a slender woman covered with an Astral Dress constructed with night sky black and sunset orange. From what he can see, her age should be a little past 20 years old. She had long and slender limbs and voluptuous breasts. She had perfect proportions, enough to make gravure models run away barefooted .

She looked like a type of man-made beautiful girl------- as if she was a collection of all the woman ideals in the world. Long and glossy hair was spreading out under the wide visors of the hat, and in that interval, her pair of eyes which could be mistaken with emeralds were staring at Shidou filled with interest.

“Fuun……..?”

The spirit brought her face closer to Shidou to evaluate him. Being suddenly poked at, Shidou twitched his body in reflex.

As if she thought Shidou’s reaction was interesting, the spirit once again giggled.

“Fufu, you don’t have to be that scared. I won’t do something like eating you.”

“E-errm, I--------“

When Shidou was about to reply, the Spirit extended her other hand and lifted Shidou's chin.

"Heeh……you are quite cute. What's up with you? If I am correct, when I am coming over to this world, shouldn't there be an alarm ringing in this world?"

"Tha-that's……."

And, when Shidou was about to reply back from completely having the pace taken away, Kotori's voice echoed from his right ear.

"Shidou, the choices!"

On the <Fraxinus> bridge's main monitor showing Shidou and the witch-like spirit, a window was displayed.

The AI equipped on <Fraxinus> has responded to that situation and displayed the choices.

"There is only one reason. I came to meet you."

"I-I[8A 6] don't know anything……..I was late in running away and when I noticed, I was over here……."

"For now, is it okay if I fondled your boobs?"

"All members-------your choices!"

When Kotori shouted from the captain seat, the crew lined up in the lower deck started operating the consoles near their hands.

Immediately, the total results were displayed on the screen.

and were struggling and---------there were no votes in .

“Well……. That’s about right.”

After Kotori said that while moving the Chupa chups rod around, Nakatsugawa from the lower deck snapped his fingers.

“This should be . As long as we have no clue to what disposition the opponent has yet, acting oddly should be dangerous.”

However, as if to oppose to that, this time Minowa raised her voice.

“No, this has to be . Nakatsugawa is a guy so you might not know this, but Shidou-kun is unexpectedly the type that would tickle maternal instincts! From what we can see, the spirit this time is an onee-san! It is time to make best of that weapon to its maximum!”

When Minowa was displaying a speech with great ardor, Shiizaki [Ah--…….] raised a soft voice to show her approval.

“I see, it’s not like I don’t understand……..but this is unexpected, for to have not a single vote in it. I thought someone like Kannazuki would be playing a fool again”

Kotori rearranged her legs while turning around and looked behind the captain seat. When she did that, a tall man with a well-featured nose bridge making an extremely serious face standing there could be seen.

"That is impossible. I am always serious."

"The real reason?"

"The bulges of her chest are so supreme, I have no interest in that kind of sloppy boobs."

"……"

"If the choice was [Please lick the other side of the knee], then I will be troubled a bit."

"……."

*choi**choi* Kotori silently bent her fingers, and when Kannazuki folded his knees, she shot out the licked finished Chupa chups towards his eyes.

"Nwwwwwwooooooooooooooo!?"

Kannazuki pressed his eyes and fell behind.

Kotori took out a new Chupa chups from her candy holder while turning on the mic switch connecting to Shidou's incam.

"-------Shidou, it's . Moisten your eyes as much as possible while looking at her with upturned eyes."

"……eh,eehhhh……."

Hearing the instruction heard from his right ear, Shidou reluctantly raised his eyebrows. Shidou is already a high school student.

In whatever circumstances, he does not want to act like a child.

"Did something happen?"

But, maybe she thought it was strange for Shidou to suddenly make a reluctant face, the spirit tilted her head. He wanted to avoid being suspicious but the space in between was opened for too long. Without any choice, he followed Kotori's instruction and opened his mouth while lightly looking at her with upturned eyes.

"E-err……I……don't know anything. I was late in running away and when I noticed, I was over here……."

"…….!"

After Shidou said that with moistened eyes, the Spirit immediately opened her eyes wide.

And while her cheeks were slightly blushed, *Nii* she raised the sides of her lips.

"Fuun…… is that so. What is your name?"

"E-eerrr…… it's Itsuka Shidou."

"Shidou-kun huh. Ufufu, what a cute name."

"E-err, how about you?"

When Shidou said that the Spirit *fufu* made a cute laugh.

"I am Natsumi. Well----------I seem to be called <Witch> by you people."

"Natsumi.....san."

"Fufu, Natsumi is okay. I don't need the honorifics too. I don't really like being formal."

"E-errr……then, Natsumi."

When Shidou scratched his cheeks while saying her name, the Spirit-------Natsumi nodded in satisfaction.

And then, [aah], *pon* she hit her hands together as if she remembered something.

"Oh yeah. Fufufu, I thought of asking them when I meet a human this time."

And when he thought she made a spin on that spot, while * Katsu* making a light sound like that with her heels and making a pose, she once again directed her sights to Shidou.

"Hey, Shidou-kun. I have something I want to ask, but is it okay if I ask one question?"

"Eh? Ha-haa……go ahead."

Troubled, after Shidou nodded, Natsumi used one hand and erotically stroke her lips while smiling.

"Shidou-kun, do you think……I am beautiful?"

"Heh?"

Shidou opened his eyes wide in surprise from the unexpected question.

Well, if he was asked on whether she is beautiful or not, he would agree without an instant of hesitation. There was no doubt in that.

But, on why Natsumi asked that question……..he has no idea. There might be some kind of hidden meaning or intention to it? When he started thinking like that, he easily hesitated on replying.

"Shidou, what are you doing? If you take too much time, Natsumi might get displeased."

Coming from worried Shidou's ears, Kotori's voice flew over.

It's true that what Kotori said was correct. After Shidou strengthened his will, he opened his lips towards Natsumi.

"A-aah……. I think you are really beautiful."

"As I expected!"

Natsumi's expression immediately turned lively, and happily twisted her body while placing her hands on her cheeks.

"Hey, hey, Shidou-kun. Specifically? Which part of me is beautiful?"

"Eh?,err……your eyes slits are long, and your nose bridge is straight……"

"Un un!"

"And, your height is tall and slender, and your style is good……"

"What next what next!?"

"Also, your hair is glossy and is beautiful too……"

"Yes! You understand! Shidou-kun understands!!"

After Natsumi shouted that she hugged Shidou tightly. He was pushed on his body with the chest filled with volume and his cheeks blushed in reflex.

Natsumi did not notice that and continued hugging Shidou while happily humming.

But--------suddenly, when he thought her happy mood humming stopped, he wondered why Natsumi suddenly made a lonely face, and opened her mouth softly.

"……as expected, *this me*……is beautiful……"

"Eh?"

Shidou brought his eyebrows closer. What on earth does that mean?

But, before than Shidou was able to ask that question, Natsumi turned back.

"A-raa……?"

"……?"

Shidou followed Natsumi's sights and lifted his face--------and immediately noticed the reason.

The red sky dyed with the sunset. Over there, several fuzzy shadows wearing machines could be confirmed.

"AST…….!"

Yes. The JGDSF anti spirit team. Having the aim to defeat Spirits, they are an organization with a totally opposite goal to << Ratatoskr>>.

But Shidou made a small frown with his eyebrows. The V shape AST formation in the sky. Inside, the vanguard Origami could not be seen.

"Shidou-kun, do you know the AST?"

"! Ah------"

Being asked by Natsumi, Shidou immediately twitched. Maybe, he might have said something unnecessary.

But Natsumi did not bother much and patted on Shidou's head like praising a little child.

"You are a knowledgeable one. Good boy, good boy."

"Ha-haa….. Thank you"

She was a somewhat crazy Spirit. Shidou made a wry smile while replying back.

However, he could not afford taking his time for too long. The AST arriving would mean----------

"Shidou! Run away!"

"…….!"

At the same time with Kotori's shout shaking his right ear's eardrum, when he thought there was a flash in the sky, a huge amount of missiles were pouring down towards Shidou and Natsumi.

"U-uwah……..!"

Shouting in reflex, he covered his body. But, unlike Shidou, Natsumi was calm and *fufu* made a smile before raising her right hands high and shaking her throat.

"-----Well then, it's time for work, <Haniel>."

The moment Natsumi said that, a broom appeared from the empty space and landed on Natsumi hands. Although it has a shape of a broom, there was a metal or gem mounted on the tip, making a fantasy-like sparkle.

Most probably------it was an Angel. The absolute weapon the Spirit holds.

Natsumi used that broom and make one spin before thrusting its butt to the ground. When she did that, the tip of the broom opened and released a dazzling light that looked like it was reflecting the evening sun.

In the next instant----------

Pon such a comical sound was produced and all missiles closing in on Shidou and Natsumi transformed into deformed carrots.

"Huh…….?"

Unable to understand what happened, after Shidou's eyes turned into a dot, the carrot shaped missiles landed on the ground and *BOMB!* A comical explosion sound as if it was like a gag manga was raised.

"J-just now, what just……."

"Wait for a bit, Shidou-kun."

After Natsumi said that, she sat on the broom in front of the dumbfounded Shidou, and while making acrobatic traces, she flew to the sky.

"……! She's coming! Shoot!"

The AST leader gave out her instruction in response to that. The wizards deployed in the sky all squeezed the trigger at once and a large number of bullets were scattered towards Natsumi.

However, Natsumi wasn't particularly panicking. After flying around as shed, she once again activated the tip of the broom and it released a dazzling sparkle. The radiating light wrapped around the released missiles and AST members.

When she did that, in the next moment-----

"Wha……. What is this……..!?"

This time, not only the missile but also the AST members wrapped in the light were changed into something else completely in one instant. Rabbit, dogs and pandas, they were turned into those cute looking characters.

"Ufufu, everyone is cuter that way right?"

After Natsumi said that while smiling, she made a circle in the sky and flew back to Shidou. The sky still had the AST members in a comical state there, but all of them were confused in the sudden situation and temporarily could not take in commands.

"Okay, now finished. I thought taking the chance of running to a place where these peoples can't get me but……..Shidou-kun want to come with me?"

"Eh……. Is that okay?"

"Of course.----------if you praise Onee-san more though."

After saying that, Natsumi made a cute gesture and winked at him.

But------at that moment. Up from the sky, someone released a carrot shaped missile and as it was heading towards the both of them, a comical impact sound was produced like just now.

"Uwah……!"

It had firepower that could not compare with the original missile at all. Maybe because it exploded at a close distance, a

strong cloud of dust flowed outwards from the impact. The dust entered Shidou's his and blinded him momentarily.

And then.

"Fu……..fu, Fueekushoon!"

Probably inhaling some of the dust from the cloud into her nose , Natsumi produced a large sneeze.

When she did that, Shidou felt a light sparkled in front of him through his closed eye lids. Yes-----it was like, Natsumi was the one emitting the light.

And when he thought the light died down, his sight through his eyelids immediately brightened once more.

"Hn……."

Shidou rubbed his eyes, and somehow managed to open his eyelids.

At the same time, coming from the Incam in his right ear, the alarm announcing an emergency situation echoed.

"Shidou! Be careful! Natsumi's mood level is rapidly falling!"

"----------eh?"

Shidou raised his eyebrows from Kotori's words. When he did that, the cloud of dust covering the surroundings lit up and Natsumi could be seen once more.

---for some reason, Natsumi's face was blushed red and she was glaring at Shidou with detest.

"…….Did you see?"

Natsumi was sending a sharp glare towards Shidou while saying that as if she was groaning with a low voice, different from anything until now. Towards the sudden change from the previously cheerful Natsumi, Shidou brought his eyebrows closer in bewilderment.

"Se-see, what……."

"Don't play a fool! Just now my--------my…….!"

After Natsumi grinded her teeth half-way through her words, she straddled the broom she was holding and floated to the sky just like that.

"Now that you have seen it, I cannot afford it to end it like this ……! Remember this. I will end your life……!"

Like that, she pointed her fingers at Shidou----------and Natsumi disappeared to the other side of the sky with tremendous speed.

"! She ran away! Chase after her!"

The AST captain's voice echoed from the sky. When he looked over, the AST members were all turned back into their normal forms from the previous comical ones. They expanded their

machine's wings, reforming their formation and chased after Natsumi who disappeared into the sky.

"Wha…….. What was that……"

Being left behind alone, Shidou looked up at the sky blankly.



Chapter 2: Twelve Photos

Part 1

Monday, October, 16. Tobiichi Origami sighed softly as she sat in her assigned school seat.

"……..."

She had hair that tickled the tip of her shoulders, a slender body , and an imperceptibly doll-like face.

But if one was close to her, they might notice the slightly gloomy face Origami was making right now. The reason was simple.

Yesterday evening. A spacequake omen was observed at the outskirts of Tenguu city and the evacuation announcement had been proclaimed nearby.

This meant the appearance of a Spirit and the AST members moved out promptly and attacked.

However, without being added into the AST member operation team, Origami obeyed the alarm and went to the shelter with everyone and could only wait for the Spirit's threat to disperse.

Impatient. Irritated. In spite having the power to pull a trigger, she was not permitted to do so.

That was the reason of the slight discord on Origami's usually flat expression.

Nonetheless, it was something inevitable.

Last month, she used the annihilation armor <White Licorice> enshrined in the hangar without permission and attacked friendly troops. In the end, she pointed her fangs towards the DEM wizards that were wearing irregular equipment.

As a result, during the time before her punishment, Origami was put into a light house arrest state and was prohibited from using any AST related equipment.

Naturally, on top of the original unarguable punishment, she was in a state where she was sentenced with several criminal penalties. But, because it was an irrational action in relation to DEM this time from the other side, there were many voices protecting Origami inside the JGSDF so the discussion regarding the decision of her punishment were dragged on. Considering this, it could be said Origami was once again blessed with fortune.

However, if that was the only thing needed to dispel Origami's disposition, then that might not be the case. Different from the previous reason, there was one more. There was an event occurrence that made Origami's feelings discomposed.

"Shidou……"

Origami mumbled in a soft voice where no one can hear it, and looked right.

Yes. Origami's right seat was still empty.

Origami's most beloved person, Itsuka Shidou's seat.

There was still time for morning homeroom. It's not like Shidou 's absence is fixed. But……Origami had one pending matter.

She quietly left her seat, and stood in front of the seat further right of Shidou's seat.

"Nu?"

Like that, the girl that sat over there probably noticed Origami's existence and while releasing a doubtful voice, she looked over with unpleasant eyes.

"……What is with you, something you want?"

The girl Yatogami Tohka sent a glare toward Origami while saying that.

Origami's pending matter was this girl's existence. In a somewhat unpleasant way, since this girl's house was nearby Shidou's, they happened to come to school together a lot.

"Shidou hasn't come yet?"

When Origami asked, Tohka [Muu] distorted her expression [Tsuun!] before turning the other way.

"Fuun! I won't tell you that Shidou had something to do right now and is going to be a little late!"

"……"

If that is the case, overstaying is useless, and Origami silently returned to her seat. Naturally, there was no reason to have a conversation with Yatogami Tohka unless it was needed to.

Probably getting angry from Origami's attitude, Tohka [Beeh] brought out her tongue. In every direction of the classroom, everyone else looked at the sequence with tired familiarity.

Then the classroom door opened and a young man entered.

And, at that moment.

With handsome facial features and kind eyes. Yes. It was Origami's lover, Itsuka Shidou.

"Oooh Shidou!"

Origami looked at Tohka with annoyance, while Tohka's expression completely changed as she stood up from her seat after raising her bouncy voice.

When she did that, Shidou twitched his eyebrows as if he noticed, and Tohka walked over to him.

"You were fast! Did you finish what you were doing?"

"Aah, thanks to you. More importantly, may I have a moment?"

"Nu? What is it?"

Tohka tilted her head. When she did that, Shidou made a gentle smile, threw the bag he was holding to the ground, and used his freed hands and *mukyuu* grabbed Tohka's breast.

"Mu……..? Hnn……."

Tohka was blank for a while because she did not understand what happened and...

"Wha-wha-wha-wha-wha-wha-wha-wha-wha……What are you doing!?"

Her face was flushed red in one beat and Tohka released her fist towards Shidou's face.

"Otto!"

However, after Shidou dodged Tohka's attack with magnificent body handling, he alternately closed and opened his fist as if to think over the feeling the breast he was enjoying just now.

"Iyaa--, that was some splendid breasts! The feeling of fondling a natural airhead is different."

"Wha-wha……..!"

"This time, for one round, is it okay if I fondle directly? I will be gentle too."

"Wha-what are you saying! Are you joking!?"

Tohka said in bewilderment as she held down her chest with both her hands, her cheeks as red as a tomato.

Seemingly, as if they happened to hear the commotion, the team of three girls that were chatting in the nearby desk surrounded Tohka and glared at Shidou.

Yamabuki Ai, Hazakura Mai, Fujibakama Mii. They were Tohka 's good friends and the famous female trio of 2nd year class 4.

"Wait a second Itsuka-kun, what are you thinking suddenly!?"

"That's a normal crime though!"

"Should I pluck your darn fruits off you bastard!?"

Coming from each mouth, they lined criticisms against him.

But, after Shidou shrug his shoulders as if he wasn't really bothered by them, he took Ai's hands that was near him with elegant movements and pushed her back to the wall. Then, he used his other hand and lifted Ai's chin up.

"I understand you want to be looked after. But, don't shout so much. Should I seal those lips of yours?"

"Eeh……!?"

From Shidou's sudden counter-attack, Ai opened her eyes wide and her body stiffened. Mai and Mii, shocked at the unexpected events occurring, forgot to restrain Shidou.

Shidou *fufu* distorted his mouth into a fearless look and, while lifting Ai's face up, brought his lips closer. "Ya-yaaa……. ….! I have Kishiwada-kun…….!"

Even though Ai attempted to stop him, Shidou didn't stop. He slowly filled in the gap and Ai stiffened her body as she closed her eyes tightly.

Shidou made a mischievous smile, brought his lips closer to Ai' s ears, and *fuu* blew softly. "Ha-hanyaaa……"

Her knees swung *Gaku**gaku* and Ai collapsed on the spot.

When they came back to their senses, Mai and Mii twitched their shoulders.

"Ah, Ai!"

"Damn you, how dare you do that to Ai!?"

They cried and faced toward Shidou with stern expressions.

However, at that moment, Shidou lowered his posture and grabbed both Mai and Mii skirts with his hands and flipped them up. The guys in the class [Ooooooooooooooooooooooohhhhh!] became excited and Mai and Mii pressed down their skirts in panic .

"Kyaaaaaaaaaaaaa!?"

"Wha-What are you doing!"

"Hahaha, both of you sure are wearing some cute underwear! By all means, let me appreciate them next time in bed."

""Wha……!?""

Mai's and Mii's faces blushed red.

After Shidou said [Adieu] with two fingers standing up in a snobby gesture, he passed through the gap between Mai and the rest with light body movements and exited the classroom.



"……Shidou?"

Within the disconcerted classroom, Origami slightly raised her eyebrows.

Part 2

"Fuuaaaaa……"

As he released a loud yawn, Shidou walked in the Raizen high school's corridor.

It seemed the chime signaling the end of 4th period had already rang; female students moving with their bentos and guys dashing towards the school canteen could be seen. Shidou scratched his cheeks while grumbling to himself.

"It's already lunch break ……I came here quite late huh?"

Yes, an emergency countermeasure meeting was opened yesterday in <Fraxinus> and Shidou was required to attend. Originally, it was not a type of meeting that would end deep into the night. But this time, since Natsumi's ability and intentions could not be grasped at all and because of the remark she left behind could cause some kind of danger to Shidou when he headed back, the time taken was longer than usual.

Although he did take a nap just in case, it didn't take all the drowsiness away completely. He scratched his eye with the back of his hand while sighing once more.

But, when he climbed up the stairs and opened his classroom door, Shidou's drowsiness completely disappeared.

"……!!"

That was because all the students glared daggers towards Shidou when he entered the classroom.

Shidou twitched his shoulders and looked around in discomfort .

"Eh……? Wha-what? What happened, everyone……?"

Having no idea what was going on, sweat flowed down Shidou's cheeks. Gathered in the corner of the classroom, Ai, Mai, and Mii's eyes glittered and approached Shidou's direction with quick movements.

"How dare you come back here shamelessly, Itsuka Shidoooooouuuu!?"

"You should know what you have done!"

"Through the sense of pain, we will make sure you regret you were born!"

Each one of them said that and surrounded Shidou, and [Guruuuuuu……] growled like wolves.

Shidou's body froze on reflex. It was not the first time he was yelled at by these three girls but there was nothing that came to mind today that could have set them off. Rather, judging from the way these girls spoke, it was like they were saying Shidou came to class a little while ago and had done a terrible deed.

"Wai-wai-wait a second! Why on earth are you all that angry!?"

While Shidou spread out his hands to calm Ai, Mai, and Mii who suddenly stood up against him, wondering what they were unhappy about, the girls raised their voices and approached Shidou.

"It's useless even if you play innocent!"

"That's right! We have many eyewitnesses!"

"This sakura blizzard, I won't let you say you had forgotten about it!"

Ai used her right hand and made an unlady-like hand sign, Mai spreads her hands to show everyone in the classroom, and Mii made a gesture to expose her shoulders, but in the end she stopped .

However, even though they said that, he had nothing that came to mind. He made his eyebrows into a 八 kanji shape[8B 1]. while looking around to seek help.

As if to respond to that, he heard a familiar voice coming behind Ai, Mai, and Mii.

“You three, may I have a moment?”

“Tohka!”

Shidou’s expression brightened and called out the owner of that voice.

Tohka made a へkanji[8B 2] with her mouth while passing through the gap between Ai and Mai, and walked until she was in front of Shidou. After Shidou made a relieved sigh, he faced Tohka and asked:

“You saved me Tohka. What happened to these girls? Even though I just got to school----------“

Tohka’s cheeks blushed *posu*, and she hit Shidou’s stomach.

“……Why did you suddenly do something like that? Err, how should I put this……that scared me!”

“Heh……? wha-what are you saying, Tohka……? I didn’t----------“

"……What?"

When Shidou answered, Tohka brought her eyebrows closer and made a stern expression before tears accumulated in her eyes while she continuously hit Shidou's chest.

"Wah, wha-what is with you Tohka? That hurts……"

"Shut up! I misjudged you Shidou! Even though I would forgive you, it was unwilling for me. Why are you not accepting the things you had done!?"

"No, what do you mean by that!?"

"……! Tha-that is……er, that, m-my……"

Tohka hesitated, and her red face turned even redder and she looked downwards.

Seeing Tohka like that, Ai, Mai, and Mii hugged her.

"It's okay! It's okay Tohka-chan!"

"Not only did he deny his crimes, to think he would make the victim experience a flashback!"

"There isn't even a hell for you to fall into!"

"No, that's why! What are you all talking about!?"

Unable to stand it, Shidou raised a shout.

And at that moment, Shidou's right wrist was grabbed.

"Eh?"

Appearing out of nowhere, Tobiichi Origami stood with a calm gaze but with a light of intention that could be felt deep inside as she stared at Shidou.

"O-Origami? Don't tell me I did something to you too……?"

As Shidou asked her fearfully, Origami cast her eyes down and shook her head.

"Nothing."

"I-I see……"

From Origami's reply, Shidou released the strength in his right hand made by the nervousness and made a sigh.

Then, Origami tugged Shidou's hand towards her blouse that she unbuttoned beforehand and plunged them into her breasts.

"Aguayaaa!?"

From the sudden sensation, Shidou made a sound that had never before been emitted from his throat.

Even though he hurried and tried to pull his hand, she held his wrist tightly, *I can't move!* Rather, each time he tried to resist, the

warm and soft feeling transmitted to his sensitive palms and fingers and it made Shidou's mind go crazy.

"Wha-what are you doing--!?"

At that moment, Tohka downcast face looked up and she removed Origami's hold from Shidou.

After Shidou pulled his freed hand in panic, he made a big inhale to calm his heart down which was violently beating…… …… But, when he breathed in, he smelled a slightly good scent emanating from his right hand which had the Origami's warmth and feeling left behind, and his face turned even redder.

"O-Origami……? Didn't you say I did nothing to you……?"

When Shidou asked her in embarrassment, Origami nodded.

"Yes. That's why I'll have you do it now."

"Ha……... Haaaa!?"

"Go ahead, do the things you done to everyone to me. Push me to the wall and lift my chin, blow a sweet breath to my ears and flip my skirt up."

"Wha……!?"

Shidou opened his eyes wide from the extremely detailed instructions as Ai, Mai, and Mii blushed from embarrassment.

Origami didn't care and continued talking.

"And then after exchanging a deeply passionate kiss, tear off my shirt, steal my maidenhood, and leave your mark on my body that will never disappear in a lifetime."

"E-eeeeh!?"

"Tobiichi Origami! Shidou will not do something like that!"

When Shidou raised his voice, Tohka raised an unbearable shout.

However, Origami was not bothered about it and gradually came closer to Shidou.

"Go ahead, Shidou. Go ahead."

"Wait……..no, errm……..."

"Go ahead."

"So-sorryyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyy!"

Shidou apologized for some reason and ran away from the spot.

Naturally, Origami responded quickly to prevent Shidou from running away, but she was blocked by Tohka and a quarrel ensued .

Shidou took the chance to run to the corridor and escaped to a safe place where Origami couldn't find him immediately.

While wiping off the sweat oozing down, he arranged his rough breathing.

"What is everyone saying? I just came to school……"

After saying that, he raised his eyebrows. It was as if everyone was talking about how Shidou did something bad just recently.

"Hn…….?"

While Shidou placed his hands on his chin to think about it, two girls he knew walked towards him.

"Ou, Kaguya, Yuzuru……wait------"

When he called out to them, Shidou noticed something weird. For some reason, both of them were not wearing their Raizen uniforms but were wearing the school's designated swimsuit.

"……un?"

"Spotted. It's Shidou."

Kaguya and Yuzuru noticed Shidou and twitched their eyebrows simultaneously.

When they recognized him, both of them *Ba*! spread their hands at the same time as if to intimidate Shidou.

"We finally found you Shidou……! You haven't ran away yet huh!? Fuun, I'll praise that courage of yours!"

"Alert. We won't lower our guard anymore. We'll have this settled properly."

"Wha……!?"

From both of their responses, Shidou stiffened his body and stepped back.

"Do-don't tell me you aren't going to say…… I did something to you two right?"

Shidou asked with a shaking voice as Kaguya and Yuzuru raised their eyebrows in doubt.

"Damn you Shidou, don't play a fool! Anyways, just give back my underwear you stole from me just now!"

"Resent. Who was it that said [Actually, I have a bra fetish], and poured water all over Yuzuru I wonder?"

"I-iiih!?"

Being informed again about another crime that he did not remember, Shidou opened his eyes wide.

"I don't understand what you were thinking but we can't lower our guard even for a little around you."

"Consent. Yuzuru panicked since there wasn't a change of gym uniform but luckily there was one placed inside the pool bag."

"I-I didn't do anything like-------"

"Are you trying to play dumb!? That's useless! I'm sure that was Shidou! There was no way I would mistake Shidou's face!"

"Consent. That is true. There is no way Kaguya the lover of Shidou would make a mistake."

"What are you saying Yuzuru!? You're the same as me since you said that…….!"

"Ignore. No idea what Kaguya is talking about."

The Yamai sisters argued with each for a while but then swung their heads and once again looked back at Shidou.

"Anyway! I won't let it end while I am still beaten! The crime of looking down on Yamai, we will have you compensate with that body! In other words... Shidou! Take off your pants!"

"Agree. On top of that, Yuzuru will dampen Shidou's whole body with a spray."

After saying that, the Yamai sisters gradually closed the gap between them and Shidou.

"Do-don't joke with me…….!"

He couldn't stand receiving the revenge of the crimes that he did not remember. Shidou turned his heels and was about to run away.

However, at that moment, he could hear a familiar voice again coming away from his escape route which was behind him.

"Itsuka-kun……..!"

She was a woman wearing glasses and a petite body. Although she looked young, he knew she was not a student since she was not wearing a school uniform. Shidou's homeroom teacher Okamine Tamae, nicknamed Tama-chan.

"Ta-Tama-chan…… uhh, Okamine-sensei!"

Shidou corrected the pet name he accidentally said out of habit and as he called her name, Tama-chan-Sensei walked heavily towards Shidou and immediately grabbed Shidou's shirttail.

"Wha-what's wrong, Sensei……?"

As Shidou asked the question with dread, Tama-chan-sensei made a face as if she was going to cry any second and moaned a complaint.

"Af-after doing something like that to me, what are you saying now……? I-I can no longer get married…… I will have you properly take responsibility okay!?"

"E-Ehhhh!?"

He was prepared to a certain extent. But, as expected, it was one step too far. He twitched his shoulders and took one step back.

When he did that, a young man appeared from the corner of the corridor and when he saw Shidou, he [Hii] made a frightened voice.

It was Shidou's friend, Tonomachi Hiroto. His hair hardened with wax, and he had a fearless look. His body physique was also blessed more than Shidou. But even so, for some reason, he hugged his shoulders in a girlish gesture and *Kata**Kata* his teeth was chattered.

"To-Tonomachi……?

When Shidou called out to him with a dubious voice, Tonomachi's whole body trembled like a Chihuahua.

"Itsuka…….*Kun*, errr, errm, hey……I often joke around and sometimes cause some misunderstandings but……I don't have that interest so……"

"What on earth happened to you!?"

After shouting out that he couldn't bear it anymore, possibly surprised from the loud voice, Tonomachi pulled his head back like a turtle.

"Kuh……!"

He had no idea what was going on, but it looked like they wouldn't listen to any apologies. Overall, staying in the school was bad. Shidou shifted his eyes left and right to find an escape route.

And---------

"Eh…….?"

The instant he moved his eyes further up the corridor. Shidou felt goosebumps flowing up his whole body.

In the T-junction with light shining in from the window, a young man stood.

He had a slim body physique and somewhat neutral face. For an instant, Shidou felt as if he may had seen him before, and a strange feeling came over Shidou.

But, immediately.

He noticed the person he saw in the mirror every morning.

Yes. It was something very unbelievable but……
…Itsuka Shidou, was standing over there.

"……"

The [Other Shidou] glanced at Shidou's direction while swinging his hands lightly and distorting the side of his lips to form a smile, and walked through the corridor.

It was like he was mocking Shidou.

"Wai-wait……! What are you……!?"

Shidou raised a shout and started to run after the [Other Shidou].

But he could not compare against the Yamai sisters' agility. His right hand was grabbed by Kaguya while his left was grabbed by Yuzuru and his legs came to a halt.

"Kuku, did you think we will let you run away? Give up Shidou! You will regret your crimes!"

"Capture. Not letting you get away. Well, we will carefully dampen you."

"Wai……! Wait a second! Just now in the other side of the corridor I was……!"

If he stays like this, he would lose sight of the [Other Shidou]. Shidou strengthened his resolve *Guu*, and inserted strength in both his arms.

"Ah-----! I get it! I'll stay quiet!"

As he shouted in despair, the Yamai sisters who were restraining both Shidou's arms made a satisfied nod.

"Kuku, yes, that is good. You gave an insult like this to us Yamai's. We will have you receive an appropriate punishment."

"Consent. Shidou should have done that from the start."

Kaguya and Yuzuru released Shidou's arms. They might honestly believe in Shidou's words; but by any chance he tries to ran away, they probably thought it would be easy to capture him again.

In reality, that was correct. Even though their powers are sealed , the Yamai sisters were originally the Spirits that could control wind. Shidou's speed could not compare to theirs. It would be extremely hard to run away from these girls.

Yes……he had to make good of a chance.

"Aah, I give up. My pants right!? All I have to do is take it off right!?"

As Shidou said that, he used his freed hands and *Kacha** Kacha* started fiddling with his belt.

""""……!?""""

Due to Shidou's sudden actions, Kaguya, Yuzuru and Tama-chan-sensei twitched their bodies and covered their eyes with their hands in reflex. Incidentally, Tonomachi's face turned pale and ran away along the wall.

No matter, this was a good opportunity. When everyone were covering their faces, he ran after the [Other Shidou].

He ran to the end of the corridor and made a turn towards the direction the [Other Shidou] disappeared to. When he did that, he caught sight of the back of the [Other Shidou] further up.

"That guy……!"

Shidou clenched his teeth and increased his speed to chase after that back.

And, after running for so long...

Shidou ran around the school as if he was guided by the [Other Shidou] and in the end, they reached the door leading to the roof.

"Haa... haa... There should be no…… more place…… for you to run……"

He placed his hands on his chest to control his rough breathing.

Then, Shidou placed his hands on the knob and threw open the door. His dim view was eroded by the sense of freedom of the blue sky in an instant.

But now was not the time to be thinking about that. He took a step out to the roof and shifted his sights to every nook and cranny of the area surrounded by fences.

"Yo, that was fast."

"……!"

Shidou stiffened up when he heard the voice coming from behind him.

He turned around in panic and looked towards the direction of the voice. A boy that looked exactly like Shidou leisurely sat and gazed at him on the rooftop structure that Shidou just came out from.

"You…… as expected, are me……!?"

Shidou raised his eyebrows, and made a sullen face while glaring at the [Other Shidou].

At close distance, it could not have been a mistake in appearance. As if passing through the mirror world, a person that looked like Shidou was right in front of him.

"Fufu……"

The [Other Shidou] giggled, jumped down from the rooftop structure, and landed in front of Shidou.

Yes. From the testimonies gathered from the mouths of Tohka, the three girls, Yamai sisters, Tama-chan-sensei, Tonomachi, and several other people, all the bad deeds that Shidou could not recall.

Most likely, every one of those deeds were done by the [Other Shidou] who stood in front of him right now.

"Just as you guessed. I had a lot of fun when you weren't around."

As if he guessed Shidou's thoughts from his expression, the [Other Shidou] distorted his lips. He was exactly like Shidou, from his voice to his gestures. Each time he made a remark, a nasty feeling came over Shidou.

"Who…… are you? Why are you making the same face as me. And also, what kind of goal do you have to do something like that ……!?"

Shidou asked this without lowering his guard, the [Other Shidou] *Kusu**kusu* laughed in his throat in a manner where it was so strange he could not bear it.

"Wha-what's so strange!?"

"Fufu…… well that's strange. That's because, you haven't noticed yet, *Oh Shidou-kun!*"

"Wha……?"

Shidou gasped and opened his eyes wide.

From the voice the [Other Shidou] made, the last part turned into a girl's voice completely different from Shidou's.

A voice he heard from somewhere before……

"That voice just now…… Don't tell me... Natsumi……?"

Yes. This voice unmistakably belonged to the Spirit Shidou encountered yesterday.

The [Other Shidou] made a suspicious smile before making a circle with his other hand.

"Pin Pon! Correct. Good job! Good boy, good boy!"

"Wha-what is with that form……?"

Even while asking, the scenery he saw yesterday clearly floated inside Shidou's mind.

The Angel <Haniel> Natsumi manifested caused everyone in the AST and every missile bathed in the light released were transformed.

The ability to transform objects into something else. Thinking that it could be used on her own body, then her current form could be understood.

However, he still didn't get it. Shidou made a grim face while continuing his words.

"What is your goal!? Disguising like me and doing mischief to others……!?"

As Shidou said that, Natsumi immediately lost her smug expression and glared back at Shidou.

"……You don't know? Seriously?"

"Wha-what is……?"

Pierced by Natsumi's sharp glint in her eyes, Shidou felt a hallucination as if his heart was being tightened.

At the same time, the words Natsumi left came back to him.

(Now that you had seen it, I cannot afford it to end it like this……! Remember this. I will end your life……!)

"Ah..."

Shidou twitched his shoulders and gulped.

"Do-don't tell me, when you meant ending my life……"

"-----twenty points."

As Shidou said that in fear, Natsumi half-opened her eyes while replying.

"Huh……?"

"Didn't I say it before? I will not let the person who knows my secret go that easily. Did you think I would forgive you in these bouts of harassment? Don't screw with me... I will beat you into a broken pulp even more……!"

"Wai-wait a second. From the beginning, I didn't know Natsumi had a secret-----"

As Shidou said that, Natsumi *Dan!* stopped him mid-sentence by slamming her heel on the roof.

"----------Houra, nee. That's why it's dangerous. The person that knows my secret must not exist in this world!"

"……!?"

Overpowered by the intensity of Natusmi's odd bloodcurdling expression, Shidou took a step back in reflex.

However, Natsumi didn't bother about it and made a violent smile while pointing at Shidou.

"But rest assured. There are two Shidou-kun's now. Nee? Something like having two identical people is strange right? We have to make it one person, or else it's a no-go right?"

"One person…… wait, don't tell me……"

Shidou's face scrunched up in fear as Natsumi continued smiling and nodded calmly.

"***From today onwards, I will become Shidou-kun. I will be acting as Shidou-kun from now on.*** Do not worry about a thing. My observing eye is perfect. I have made a thorough investigation of you and the people who are related to you. I won't have fun like before anymore. Even if you are not here, no one will notice. Even if you are not here, the world will continue moving without change."

While making motions as if performing in a opera, Natsumi continued.

"----------Fufu, rest assured. It's not like I will kill Shidou-kun. But, I'll only have you go to a place different from here so that you won't be able to disturb me."

"D-don't screw with me! That kind of thing----------"

Right when Shidou raised his voice from being unable to bear it any longer...

Batan! The roof door swung open and the two girls came out.

---It was Tohka and Origami.

"Why you, go somewhere else you bastard! I will find Shidou!"

"That is my line. I can't leave it to someone like you. You should quickly go back to the classroom."

It would seem both of them were looking for Shidou. They glared at each other and pushed at each other while walking out to the roof.

But, both of them probably noticed the current occupants on the roof as they stopped their movements exactly simultaneously and widened their eyes in disbelief.

"Th-there are…… two Shidou?"

"……What does this mean?"

Tohka and Origami asked with their eyes raised in suspicion and looked alternately at Shidou and Natsumi's faces. It was only natural, for there were two people with identical appearances.

However, this was a chance. Now that both of them had definitely seen two Shidous, they would probably understand the one doing bad deeds to everyone was not the real Shidou.

"Tohka, Origami! Listen to me, this guy is------"

"This guy is the fake! He is disguised as me and playing mischief on everyone!"

But, Natsumi made a louder voice as if to interrupt Shidou's words.

Naturally, different from just now, it was perfectly back to Shidou's voice.

"Wha……? D-don't get tricked both of you! I am the real one!"

"What are you saying!? I am the real one!"

With Shidou and Natsumi using the same voice and the same way of speaking, Tohka and Origami slightly raised their eyebrows. It would seem they were bewildered on which Shidou is the real one.

But, the only thing Shidou could do was desperately appeal to them. Towards both of them, he raised his voice even further.

"Tohka, Origami, believe me……! I am the real Itsuka Shidou!"

"Don't get fooled! I beg of you two------believe me!"

Natsumi also made a desperate voice. Looking at that state, she seemed to be the real Shidou as well.

"Muu……this,means one of them is the real one. Then-------"

"An incomprehensible situation. However-------"

After Tohka and Origami compared the Shidous for a while, they pointed their fingers at one person.

"You're the fake."

"You are the fake."

They thrusted their fingers towards the direction of the fake Shidou at the same time.

"Wha……!?"

Natsumi's face was filled with surprise. She didn't think that they could confirm the genuineness without any doubt.

"Wha-what are you saying, both of you. I am-------"

Even though Natsumi did not give up and continued her words , it looked like Tohka and Origami weren't planning to change their minds. They swung their hands and approached Shidou.

At that moment, it seemed Natsumi finally gave up. She glared at Shidou, Tohka and Origami in detest.

"……How did you figure it out? My transformation was perfect. Even guessing would be a 50/50 chance. How can you two be so confident as to point your fingers at me?"

In response to Natsumi's question, Tohka and Origami looked at each other for an instant and opened their mouths in turn.

"Even if you ask why…… I just somehow knew. It's true that you look exactly like Shidou but, when you stood next to the real one, I felt your smell is different. Just that."

"I might be fooled if you were alone. Actually, I thought you were Shidou until just now. However, it was a different story if it was under the condition of the question in regarding which one is the real one if there were two Shidous. Your blinking was 0.05 faster and your body center was slanted 0.2 degrees to the left compared to Shidou. That was no mistake."

While Tohka was being vague and Origami continued talking on and on, Natsumi looked at them and made a face in disbelief.

"Wha-what…… What is with these girls? They're crazy…… ……!"



"……No, that's... well……"

As Natsumi exclaimed while shuddering, Shidou replied vaguely.

The fake was pointed out quickly. Normally, he would be thanking them properly but…… it was not like he didn't understand the feeling why Natsumi is shocked.

Natsumi ground her teeth in disgust and then raised her hands high.

A broom type angel appeared out of empty space and she grabbed it as the tip of the broom opened radially and released a sparkling reflective light as bright as the sun.

In the next moment, Natsumi's body glowed and she transformed back into the slender beautiful girl Shidou saw yesterday.

"Wha……!?"

"……!?"

Tohka and Origami opened their eyes wide in surprise and lowered their bodies defensively to protect Shidou.

However, Natsumi was not bothered about their responses and ground her teeth while scratching her head.

"Impossible……impossible…… impossibbleeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee!"

"Wha……?"

"Not only was my secret exposed, are you saying that even my perfect transformation had been seen through? It's a lie…… …… something like this is a lie! I will definitely…… I will definitely not accept this……!"

Natsumi angrily shouted and *Pi*! pointed her fingers towards Shidou and the girls.

"I won't let it end like this……! I will definitely scare the hell out of you all……!"

With a final look of hostility at Shidou and the girls, she sat upon the handle and *Ton* kicked the ground which sent her into the sky.

"Ah------O-oi!"

Even though he hurried and raised his voice, it was too late. Natsumi did not look back at Shidou and her silhouette grew smaller as she flew away.

"Kuh……"

Even though he had to raise Natsumi's affection level to seal her Reiryoku[8B 3], no progress was made in the end.

Nonetheless, it was an unexpected event. Natsumi appeared in front of Shidou tried to replace him. It might be called an strange. Taking this into account, he had to report to Kotori about this event.

However, before he did that, there was something that he had to do no matter what.

"Shidou?"

"Shidou!"

Tohka and Origami watched without lowering their guards until Natsumi's figure completely disappeared, and then called out Shidou's name turned to him.

"Wha-what is it?"

Shidou replied nervously, guessing what they were going to say next.

"Who was that!?"

"Who was that girl and what relations do you have with her?"

Both of them asked the questions that he had roughly predicted.

Shidou's face stiffened, and he thought of a possible way to somehow explain the situation without revealing too much information about Natsumi.

Part 3

DEM industries, Great Britain company building.

Inside the conference room on the 20th floor right now, there were several men lined-up.

All of them are board members of this DEM Company. Everyone was sitting at a giant elliptical table and were flipping through the documents on their hands while making the same difficult face.

Nonetheless, it was also something not impossible.

Everyone one of them should have already received reports from here and there. And even the documents on their hands had the situation written in details.

---Not only did the DEM company managing director Isaac Westcott swing his authority unreasonably, he also drove the DEM Japan branch and also the famous facilities established there into a partial destruction state.

What's more, on top of causing several deaths and injuries to valuable Wizards, he also added a bonus of freely exposing the secret technology which is the Realizer to the public eye. If there was no one that would move their expression even by an inch from looking at this chains of report documents then, they should immediately quit the company and switch to being a gambler.

Nonetheless naturally, it's not like everyone who is here was making that face.

On the chair placed furthest back of the room. Over there, there was one man sitting there calmly.

He has a jet-black suit covering his body. A young man around the age of his mid thirties. As if looking over the meeting, his unpleasant eyes that express darkness were peeking from the gap of his dark grey bangs.

Sir Isaac Ray Peram Westcott. He was the DEM company's MD (Managing Director) which was exactly the topic of discussion right now.

"What……were you thinking! Mister Westcott!"

A member of the board with his hands trembling slammed the documents on his hands to the table and raised his voice. It was a middle-aged man wearing glasses. Although he was young inside the board members but, even so he still looked older than Westcott .

People that were warned not to act rude towards the MD were not in the spot right now. Only when there is a difference in standard can it be effective, everyone was thinking the same thing.

However, while looking at the matter, the topic of conversation Westcott sitting on the chair placed right at the back of the room wasn't particularly flustered and only shrugged his shoulders.

"I don't understand the intentions of your question, Murdoch."

"Please do not act innocent!"

After Westcott said that, Murdoch violently grabbed the documents he threw on the table just now and carry it in front of him.

"Unreasonably meddling with the JSDF, personal utilization of equipment and Wizards, instructing a raid plan causing harm to the public, in addition of turning every corners of the office district into a war zone……..!? Even if the damage was lightly estimated, it costs more than 1 billion pounds…….! We also have a big weakness grabbed by the Japanese government! How on Earth are you going to fix all of this!?"

"No problems. There was a harvest corresponding to that."

"Harvest……? What is that?"

When Murdich said that, Westcott lifted the side of his lips.

"----------Rejoice. We have successfully inversed <Princess>."

"……!"

From Westcott's satisfied words, Murdoch and everyone from the board opened their eyes wide in surprise.

"Don't screw with me……..!! Please understand the situation! If it was strike poorly, it might advance the situation concerning the continuation of DEM Company you know!? Spirit,

what about it!? How are the Spirits going to save our company's dilemma!? We don't have time to accompany you for your fun and self-satisfaction!"

"……..Hou?"

Murdoch's face was filled with anger and he raised a shout. When he did that, Westcott who was making a robotic smile until now, twitched just a little bit.

But Murdoch did not notice that and looked towards the board members lined up in the conference room.

"I want to ask all of you! Is it okay to let him do as he pleases any more than this!? if he continues any more than this, DEM industries will collapse not far in the future! Before that happens, shouldn't we take appropriate measures!?"

"Appropriate measures……which is?"

From Murdoch words, the man in the opposite side of his seat raised his voice. Murdoch spread both his hands and said that in a drama-like manner, while announcing it loudly.

"I! Right here, demand the dismissal of Westcott MD!"

"----------!"

The moment Murdoch said that, everyone from the board twitched their eyebrows. There were some who made a shocked

expression from the very obvious dismissal demand but----------more than half of them were in a manner as if they knew about the outline of this case beforehand.

After Murdoch look at that state while nodding in satisfactory, he looked towards the old man sitting beside Westcott.

"Well then, Chairman Russel. Your decision."

He said that, and tilted his head in front to urge him.

Inside the Great Britain's company, the board members of the management corporate affairs does not accept holding two posts concurrently for the chairman of board of directors. This means under pretext, the board of directors requires representative other than Westcott. And that was this chairman, old Russell.

"……...Is it okay, Mister?"

Russell sends his sights towards Westcott with a difficult face.

However, Westcott did not mind and calmly nodded.

"Of course. That is the legitimate privilege given to the board members."

"……."

After Russell cast his eyes downwards from Westcott's words, he made a sigh as if he figured out something and raised his voice.

"Well then, I will make a decision--------Those who approves Westcott's dismissal, raise your hand."

When Russell said that, Murdoch raised his right hand high up.

And as if to continue, the board of directors lined-up raised their hands one after another.

With the young official as the center, it was over half.

This was clearly an odd situation.

It's true right now, Westcott's action has called forth an unusually large ripple and there were quite a number of them keeping their dissatisfaction to his arrogant behavior from normal days. But, it was hard to think the number of people crossing the majority with quick decisions would agree with Murdoch.

Westcott looked over to Murdoch. When he did that, Murdoch * fuun* exhaled while making a scornful smile. Most probably--------right before Westcott came back to Great Britain, he has already made preparations.

While looking at that manner, Russell swept his sight around the conference room as if to count the number of officials raising their hands, and softly let out his voice.

"-----because the number of raised hands is zero, Westcott MD's request for dismissal will be rejected."

"What did you say?"

Murdoch raised his eyebrows from Russel's words.

"Please don't joke at a time like this, Mister Russel. You should have a pride as a chairman. Or what is it, did your eyes finally turned bad until you can't see the number of hands raised?"

"No. I only answered the results as I have seen."

"……...What?"

Murdoch said that in doubt and send his sights upwards then------[Hii] he gasped.

And as if to follow that, the officials raising their hands also distorted their face into pain similarly to Murdoch's.

But that was probably only natural.

That's because, the hand they raised high up was missing starting from their elbows.

"

Uh-a-a-aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!?"

Feeling pain the first time he saw it, Murdoch raised a shout and sink down on the spot. And as if to match up with that, a large amount of fresh blood spurted out from the clean sliced section.

---The conference room, turned into a painting of the hell of Pandemonium in an instant.

However inside there, a cool voice echoed from behind Westcott.

"-----Fun? Self-satisfaction? For someone that rode on the DEM name after it was build up by Isaac, you sure know how to talk like you know it."

The one who said that and took a step forward, was a girl with her Nordic blonde hair tied up that does not fit in this place. In one hand-------she was holding a laser blade the size of a petit knife.

Even though preserving the laser blade's blade without a wiring suit was very weird by itself, she even made the blade long and string thin, if she clean off the officials arm in an instant then---------it will make her capability easily known.

Ellen Mira Mathers. The chief of the 2nd executives that gets the work done from the shadow of DEM and the world's strongest Wizard.

"Well, don't say that Ellen. They used the circumstances placed on them very properly, and used the authority given to them."

"But..."

When Ellen denied stubbornly, Westcott stopped that and slowly stood up from the chair.

"There are Medical Realizers prepared in the medical office. If you join it back immediately then it would probably go back to normal after a few days.------ Go now. You all are splendid talents

shouldering DEM's future. Don't you think it is ridiculous to lose one hand from something like this?"

"……, you bastard……..!"

No longer using honorifics, Murdoch glared at Westcott.

But, Westcott did not worry about his sight, and made a small shrug with his shoulders.

"Rest assured, after I finish my **fun and self-satisfaction**, I will give this company to all of you.-------oh, it's going to be soon. Compared to the time **we** continuously waited until now."

Saying it like that, Wescott silently smiled.

Part 4

"Ah----……"

Shidou shook his throat as if to grumble, and threw his leg to the sofa's armrest.

Saturday, October, 21th--------5 days has passed quickly from that time when Natsumi disguised as Shidou and appeared in his school.

However, Natsumi has not once ever appeared in front of Shidou after that time. If a space quake occurs then it would be tracked by the <Fraxinus> observation device.

"…….Nothing happening like this makes it more unpleasant instead."

While lying down on the sofa in his house living room, Shidou placed his hands on his forehead and sighed.

And, when Shidou was staring at the ceiling while thinking about that, unexpectedly around his stomach, *Kyumu*! He felt something was placed hanging on it.

"Uguh…….wha-what is it…….?"

He frown his face from the sudden load and lowered his sights to his stomach.

When he did that, he saw his sister Kotori sitting there with an unconcerned face.

"……..Oi, Kotori"

When he said that, Kotori *Piko**Piko*moved the Chupa chups she was holding in her mouth while making a fearless smile, and send her sights towards Shidou's direction.

"Oh my, there was really a lot of life in it, so I thought it was a rare human leather-bound sofa."

"We don't have furniture similar to Ed Gein's[8B 4] preference"

After Shidou said that with half his eyes opened, Kotori placed a recoil on Shidou's stomach by putting her whole body weight on it before standing up on the spot.

"Kuehh!"

"Oh my, did I just hit a gold angel."

Kotori smiled while shrugging her shoulders.

"Why you……..."

Shidou rubbed around his stomach while slowly raising his body.

"Fuun, that's because even though you are in a situation of being targeted by a Spirit, you are recklessly so relaxed. We have no idea what she is going to do. Please brace yourself a little more. "

"Guh……."

If he was told like that, he has nothing he can reply back. He bit his lips and kept silent.

"We have no idea what that Spirit----------Natsumi is thinking but, it is hard to think of a fade-out without her doing anything. She will probably get in contact with Shidou in some kind of method.-----And, as long as we have no ways to contact her from our side, we have to precisely raise Natsumi's affection level at that timing. You understand that properly right?"

"I-I get it."

"I wonder about that."

When Shidou replied, Kotori shrugged her shoulders in a given up manner.

But, Kotori's words were right on the point.

Shidou, Kotori and everyone from <Ratatoskr>'s goal, was not to kill the spirit but rather to seal the Spirit's powers peacefully and let her live a peaceful life.

That's why; originally they absolutely wanted to avoid the Spirit to hold hostility for any sorts of reasons like right now.

What's more in Natsumi's case, they have no idea why for some reason she was thinking Shidou as an enemy. The first thing he has to do is to take the underhand and get in contact with Natsumi, and then find out the reason of that cause. Problems were piled up as tall as a mountain.

Maybe she saw Shidou's expression, Kotori *Fuun* exhaled and showed him the envelope she was holding.

"You finally have some tension coming out from your face.------ here, take this. It was inside the morning post"

"Eh?"

He twisted his head in wonder and received it. After he took it into his hands, he found out there was something inside from the outer thickness and weight.

It was a white side-opening envelope with only the word [Itsuka Shidou] written on it. There was no address, postal code and even a stamp was not pasted on it. Most likely, it was posted into the Itsuka house post directly.

"This is……a letter?"

"Yes. A love letter.----------from Natsumi"

"Wha……..!?"

Shidou opened his eyes wide from that name Kotori said out from her mouth, and quickly turned to the other side of the envelope.

It was sealed with wax in a polite way, and right below there, it was certain the name [Natsumi] was written on it.

After Shidou gulped, he placed the envelope on the table and sat back down on the sofa.

"I-is it alright to open it…….?"

"Yes. The moment you open it *Don*! Such a possibility exist so, I had the <Fraxinus> investigate the outer part of it. There is

nothing dangerous put into it.-------Of course, as long as the opponent is a Spirit, it's not like I can give you a definite guarantee ”

“…….”

Kotori said that while shrugging her shoulders. Shidou let sweat ooze down his cheeks while frowning his face.

But even so, just because of that reason, he cannot just leave the envelope un-opened and forget about it. He made his decision and pulled his cheeks, and after putting in some spirit, he pulled off the wax seal pushed with an imperial seal and took out its contents .

“This is…….”

“…….looks like, photographs”

Kotori peeking into Shidou's hands said that suspiciously.

Yes. Inside the envelope was several numbers of photos.

Shidou felt a somewhat out of place feeling from a Spirit sending photos but, thinking back again, if Natsumi repeatedly come over to this world silently like the few days ago, it is not weird for her to learn a lot of things about this world.

And, whatever the reason was, the problem right now was the subjects taken as a photo.

“……. This, is it perhaps me?”

Kotori frown her eyebrows while picking up a single photo.

It's true that photo was taken with Kotori wearing her middle-school uniform and hair tied up with white ribbons.

But, the line of sight was not matched and the distance was far away. It was like……rather, looking at Kotori's reaction, it is no mistake a peeping photo.

No, Kotori was not the only one. There were a total of 12 photos contained inside the envelope but, and all of it, were people close to Shidou and were photographed in full-body.

Tohka. Origami. Kotori. Yoshino. Kaguya. Yuzuru. Miku. Ai. Mai. Mii. Tama-chan-sensei. And also-----Tonomachi.

All of it were peeping photos taken when the person did not notice (Only one person, Origami was the only one noticing the camera and was looking this way)

"Wha-what is with these photos……."

It somehow felt unpleasant and Shidou raised his eyebrows. Why on earth would she send these, what was Natsumi trying to tell Shidou?

"Are the photos only inside? Any others?"

"A-aah……."

After searching the envelope, there was another paper inside, and he found out it was some sort of card inside it.

He took it out, and placed it on the table. On it, a short article was written on it.

[I am inside one of these.

Can you guess which one am I?

Before everyone disappears.

Natsumi]

Chapter 3:Morning Twelve O'clock Delete

Part 1

Next day, on 10:57am 22nd October.

Shidou looked at the clock displayed on his cellphone screen while, standing at the door in front of the Itsuka house.

The autumn sun felt good but, as expected it was already unpleasantly cold with short sleeves. Sometimes the chilling wind would shake the red leaves on the trees and pat Shidou's cheeks before passing back to the sky.

"Shidou!"

And at the same time when the clock reached 11am, he could hear a lively voice coming from the entrance of the mansion soaring beside the Itsuka house. When he looked over, he found Tohka wearing autumn fashion clothing running towards him while innocently swinging her hands. He slightly raised his hands to respond to her calling.

"Sorry, did I make you wait?"

"No, it's right on time. Rather it should be me saying sorry, calling you out all of a sudden"

"Don't worry! More importantly, where are we shopping today!?"

Tohka tilted her head and asked questions while her eyes were sparkling.

Yes. Last night, Shidou told Tohka he wanted her to follow him to go shopping with him.

"Aah---------let's see, let's head to the station for now I guess"

"Umu!"

Tohka nodded back energetically. How should he put it, it felt like she was so happy to be able to go out with Shidou until it can't be helped. Various emotions like happiness, embarrassment, pleasantness, jumbled up together and Shidou scratched his head while making a wry smile.

"……Shin, don't forget about today's goal"

From Reine's voice unexpectedly shaking his right ear's eardrum, Shidou twitched his shoulders.

"……. Ye-yes"

Shidou replied back with a soft voice and took a glance at Tohka's side face while walking beside her.

It was Tohka's usual face. There was nothing strange at all.

---But, maybe.

"……..."

Shidou gulped.

The figure of the [Other Shidou] that appeared in his school a few days ago passed by his mind.

Yes. This Tohka, might be a fake disguised by Natsumi.

Shidou silently gaze at Tohka's face while remembering the conversation he exchanged with Kotori yesterday.

"----------[I am inside one of these. Can you guess which one am I?]……..

Just before the day Shidou went out shopping with Tohka. He was with Kotori looking at the photo contained inside the envelope together while making difficult faces before muttering.

"Wha-what does……. This mean?"

"……. If we take it literally then"

The one answering Shidou's voice was not Kotori but Reine. Just now, she was called over by Kotori through the <Fraxinus>.

Reine lined up the 12 photos on top of the table.

"……. Natsumi will disguise as someone from these 12 people……. That would probably be the case"

"……..uh"

He gasped from Reine's words. But……..Shidou also somehow guessed that would be the case.

Natsumi's ability he saw a few days ago. The power of the Angel that reproduced Shidou's appearance with little difference. If she uses that, it might be possible to disguise exactly as someone else.

"And, it means she's telling me to guess which one she is disguising as……..huh"

"That should be the case……..the last part [Before everyone disappears] draws my attention a little though"

Kotori folded her arms together while saying that. Shidou gulped.

"The thing……. Is the time limit right?"

"That might……..be the case. Honestly, information is too little to make a decision"

"……. Anyway, we have to move out as soon as possible"

Reine looked at the photos while nodding difficultly before placing her hands on her mouth.

"Even if you say move out, just what are we going to do?"

"Let's see……..first off <Ratotoskr>, will try placing Reiha observation for everyone taken in these photos. The opponent is a

Spirit possessing her full powers. Things will be fast if we find even a little Reiryoku leak out"

"I see……..."

"…….However,"

And, Reine opened her mouth to continue Kotori words.

"……. It's better to think the possibility in observing her reiha is extremely low. So, at the same time, Shin, we will probably have you make a move too"

"Yeah……. So what should we do?"

Shidou gripped his fist while nodding. Although the cause is still unknown, thinking back, it was originally all of this began when Shidou harmed Natsumi's mood during the first contact. Also, he dragged everyone into this. He can't just keep quiet and look at the situation.

But.

"……..That's true. For the time being, choose the sequence on who you want to date"

"……Huh?"

From Reine's voice, Shidou let out a dumb voice.

"Da…….te? Wha-what does that mean?"

When Shidou asked with his eyebrows brought close together, Kotori answered indifferently this time.

"It is what it means. Starting from tomorrow, we will have Shidou date all 12 members shown in the photos one by one. And then-------you will check whether if you feel there is something odd with your date partner"

"……! I see!"

No matter if Natsumi has transformation abilities, and even though she can reconstruct outer factors like voice and appearance, if they were to converse, he might be able to notice a point that is amiss from usual.

However, it is not like there is not something wrong.

"……..but, everyone taken in the photo……right"

When Shidou asked with sweat flowing down his cheeks, Reine [……..aah] replied back.

"……. Of course, it's not like we will finish with all the members in one day. Even though we are in a hurry--------the limit for one day is probably 3 to 4 people"

"No, that is not the problem……well even if Tohka and the rest is okay, Yamabuki, Hazakura, Fujibakama, Tama-chan-sensei and……even Tonomachi, I will have to invite these people to dates right……?"

From Shidou's words, Kotori shrug her shoulders as if she given up.

"Haaa……now isn't the time to be saying that right. Rather , Shidou having that kind of thoughts, might be what Natsumi wants"

Told by Kotori with a rebuking tone, Shidou [Uu……] faltered.

"……Tha-that's right"

After Shidou said that, Reine made a small nod.

"……. Of course, we will provide maximum support as much as we can. Although it will be in a range where Natsumi's eyes won't touch……..in the end"

"Yes……..then, I will be counting on you for the support, Kotori"

But Kotori, frowned her eyebrows difficultly.

When Shidou twist his head from Kotori's reaction, Reine raised her voice.

"……. Yes, sorry but, Kotori can't join in as this time support"

"Eh? Is that so?"

"Well that is just about right. ……..even I am one of the suspect"

Kotori *fuun* exhaled while saying that. Shidou [Ah] opened his eyes wide.

"……so that's the case. This time, I will be serving in the support role. I am sorry to Kotori but, until we can determine which one is Natsumi, Kotori cannot enter the <Fraxinus>"

"Yes. It is a necessary measure. There is no choice"

Kotori shrug her shoulders in indifferent manner beyond expectations. During the point of time her picture was put into the envelope Natsumi sent.

It's certainly made sense. There was no out of the place feeling coming from Kotori's talk until now but, as long as there is 0.1 percent that she might be Natsumi, she cannot enter the <Fraxinus > which is the central figure of <Ratatoskr>. Something like a Spirit holding hostility to him suddenly appearing in the bridge, just thinking about it is dreadful. Thinking like that, it should be proper to leave the support role to Reine who is not in the suspects .

"But……. I wonder why Reine-san isn't included. Even though Tama-chan-sensei and Yamabuki and her gang is included "

"……..Hnn, this is completely a guess but, I was not around you when Natsumi was selecting the suspects. Recently, I

have been secluding myself inside the <Fraxinus> investigating and analyzing Natsumi.

"Aah……..I see"

"……..well naturally, there is also the possibility I might not have matched Natsumi's discernment"

Reine said that while shrugging her shoulders in self-mockery. It was a joke which was somewhat troubling to respond to. Shidou made a powerless wry smile.

Kotori made a cough to bring the talk back to normal.

"Anyway. Our winning condition is in the end, to make Natsumi fall in love and seal her Reiryoku. Please pay attention and be careful."

Midway in her words. Kotori resentfully distorted her face and

"-------if we harm Natsumi's mood any more than this then, rather than sealing Natsumi, we might be in danger with her taking hostages."

"……..!?"

From Kotori's words, Shidou felt his heart being squeezed.

"Wa-wait a second. Why hostage"

"……. Try thinking about it. Natsumi told you to try looking for her in these people.---------if there is 2 people with the same face, then the choices will become half"

"…….! That is……."

Shidou's face was filled with fear.

It's true that she was right. Even that time when Natsumi disguised as Shidou, only when she was lined up beside the real Shidou did Tohka and Origami was able to see which one was the real one.

If it was Natsumi who has met a painful experience once, she would probably not make the same mistake.

Then what would she do. The answer was very simple.

"……..she will confine the person she is disguising as somewhere else."

"That'll probably be right"

When Shidou said painfully, Kotori made a sullen face while nodding.

"There is no postponement. We will investigate 12 people in 3 separate days, and find Natsumi no matter what"

"Aah……. I will definitely find her"

Shidou re-gripped his fist and tilted his head with energy.

---And, now in the present.

Shidou was walking beside Tohka while examining her manners.

“Nu? What’s wrong Shidou?”

“! No, nothing…….”

Shidou suddenly met with Tohka’s eyes and unnaturally averted his sights. While scratching his cheeks, he fastens his walking pace by a little. Starting from the face, body, voice, the movement of tilting her head, the gesture that looks like a small animal, all of it perfectly belongs to Tohka inside Shidou’s memories. At the very least, she does not look like a fake.

But, that perfectness in return looked suspicious, and Shidou’s head was in disorder.

And, maybe guessing Shidou’s confusion, Reine's voice could be heard from the Incam. “……..calm down. Even by any chance Natsumi is disguising as Tohka, she probably won’t make any faults if you stay normal. It might be good to stir her up a bit”

“Stir her up……. You mean”

After Shidou replied softly, he immersed himself in his thoughts and--------once again brought his sights back to Tohka.

"He-hey Tohka. How long has it been since we come out together with just the both of us?"

"Mu? Why so suddenly?"

Tohka send her sights back in wonder. Shidou swing his hands to trick her.

"No, it's just somehow. I thought, we weren't really coming out with just the both of us."

"Mu……is that so? I feel we went shopping just a few days ago but……"

"Aah, really?"

While saying that, Shidou *fuumu* groaned in his mind. The day Shidou and Tohka met Natsumi, they also came shopping on that day. It looks like she remembers properly.

Wondering what she interpreted from Shidou's silence, Tohka hurried and made an add-on.

"So it's that, I think its okay no matter how many times we go out. Umu, today I was very happy and had a lot of fun."

After saying that, she made an unworried smile. Towards that cute expression, Shidou's face turned hot on reflex.

But, now wasn't the time to be thinking about that. Shidou distorted the side of his lips and made it look like a shape of a fearless smile. And, after taking gulp, he opened his mouth.

"Really, amazing. That's exactly like Tohka.-----**right, Natsumi**"

"……!"

When Shidou call out to her, Tohka twitched her shoulders and stopped her legs on the spot.

He made a small gasp from Tohka's reaction and Shidou also stopped walking.

It's not like he has any positive proof, he just made a nonchalant single comment with the aim of trying to trick her. Honestly, even by any chance Tohka was a fake disguised from Natsumi, he thought she would might not have shown any reaction.

However, from Tohka's reaction, no way---------

When Shidou stiffened his body for nervousness, Tohka slowly faced towards Shidou and looked at him with a glare. That sight was filled with hostility that makes him think it does not belong to the normal Tohka.

Shidou poured strength into his fist.

"Don't tell me, is it really you……?"

But,

"……..Shidou. Who is that woman called Natsumi? Just now, who did you make a mistake in calling?"

"Heh?"

Tohka asked him in a bad mood, and Shidou felt the strength coming out from his firmed fist.

Rather than being flustered from her identity found out, Tohka' s manner looks purely like she was in a bad mood.

"…….Shin. Right now you are in a date. If you make a mistake in calling out a woman's name with someone else, I think it is only normal to be in a bad mood"

"Ah……tha-that's also……..true"

After Shidou mumbled while letting sweat ooze down his cheeks, he spread his hands out to calm Tohka who was sending him a doubtful sight.

"So-sorry, sorry. Hoora, it's that, have you heard of [Natsu-mi]? It was originally a greeting in the Dominica commonwealth and has been popular recently……."

"Is that so…….?"

Naturally it was a random speech. Shidou nodded while apologizing to the people of Dominica in his heart.

"Fumu, what meaning is it?"

"E-errr…….something like, I love you……."

"Muu……"

When Shidou answered something random, Tohka's cheeks slightly blushed.

"Mu……..I see. Fufu……"

After saying that, her cheeks relaxed. It seems he has escaped a predicament. Shidou made a relieved sigh.

But at that moment, Tohka noticed something again and twitched her shoulders.

"Then, before that, what does the [That's exactly like Tohka] mean?"

"Eh? Ah, errr, that's……"

Unable to think of a good excuse, he became flustered. He sensed Tohka's face getting more and more doubtful.

"……. This is bad. Everything will be for naught if Tohka is in a bad mood. Can you do something to take back her mood?"

"You say mood but……..it's not going to be that easy------"

Shidou made his eyebrows into a 八 kanji shape while looking around---------and [ah] raised a soft voice.

"He-hey, Tohka. It's not afternoon yet right? It's a little early but , can we go eat?"

After saying that, he pointed towards the restaurant across the street. There was a poster put up saying [All-you can eat lunch time in session!] under the signboard showing the shop name.

"Nu? Lunch huh. Well…..I don't mind"

Tohka said that with a stern face. Normally, her eyes would be sparkling and her voice would be bouncing but……. Well, it can 't be helped.

Shidou brought Tohka who was making a difficult face along with him while entering the restaurant.

Although it was quite packed because it was lunch hour but, luckily they managed to secure a seat without waiting. He left his bag into the basket under the chair, and sends his sights towards Tohka sitting opposite him while whipping his hands with a wet towel.

"Okay, Tohka. It looks like it is in an all-you can eat style. Go ahead and take your food first"

"Mu……."

Tohka smiled broadly for an instant from Shidou's words---------however, she swung her head as if she remembered something.

"I'm okay. Shidou you go take first."

"Eh? Why again?"

"Nothing. Well then, go faster"

"O-ou……."

Urged by Tohka who was stubborn and won't give up, Shidou stood up from his seat.

"What happened to her, that Tohka"

"……. I do not know. But, it is probably safer if you follow her wishes here"

Reine said to him. Shidou [That's true] made a short answer before walking to the corner with various foods lined-up.

He then took a plate on his hands and dished up some random food before heading back to his seat.

Nonetheless, maybe because of the nervousness of having to find Natsumi, it's not like he had that much appetite. What Shidou brought back were a small amount of salad and few slices of grilled chicken.

"Okay then, Tohka go and take yours"

"……mu"

When Shidou said that, Tohka stared at the food Shidou brought back before standing up from her seat.

He slightly tilted his head while sending Tohka's back off. He thought she was still thinking about the thing just now but……
…something feels off. What on earth happened to make that Tohka make such a difficult face during eating time.

When he was thinking about things like that, Tohka came back faster than he anticipated. She placed the tableware on the table and sat on the chair.

"Well then, let's eat"

"Aah, that's right…….wait"

Being lured in, around the time he was by Tohka when she joined her hands to make an Itadakimasu[8C 1], Shidou raised his eyebrows.

The reason was simple. The amount of food Tohka brought back was extremely little. And it was even less than Shidou who has no appetite.

"Tohka……? You, is that enough for you?"

"Nu……..umu, it is enough. My stomach will be full with this much"

"……!?"

From those words, Shidou opened his eyes wide in fear.

---Impossible. The food in front Tohka she dished up was very little in amount. Unless she was a female high school student with a small appetite, there is no mistake, that amount will not make her full. And Tohka, was a glutton standing out from the people Shidou knew of.

He made a small poke on the Incam to tell that it was an emergency situation. But, a disturbance was running inside the < Fraxinus> without Shidou needing to inform them.

“No way……Tohka can, with that amount……!?”

“Don’t tell me she feels sick!?”

“Impossible! That hungry monster is!?”

The sounds of the crew making a commotion and restlessly operating the console were finely shaking the eardrum in his right ear. Maybe from the confusion, he felt as if he heard a somewhat rude naming but, Shidou chose not to ask for now.

That’s because, this un-Tohka like action has hinted a single possibility.

Which means--------there is a possibility this Tohka is not real.

“Reine-san……..!”

“……..Calm down. Let’s look at the situation for now”

Reine told him in a soft voice. Shidou placed his hands on his chest to calm the heartbeat which turned violent before he knew it, and looked back at Tohka.

“Tohka……. What’s wrong? Did you get sick?”

“Nothing like that. why?”

“Why you say……. Well that’s because”

Even when Shidou took a peek at Tohka’s plate, Tohka might have noticed his sights or might not have notice *Pan*! She joined her hands together.

“Anyway, Itadakimasu!”

“A-aah……itadakimasu”

As if he was lured in, Shidou joined his hands together, and started setting his hands on the food dished onto his plate. And like that,

“Gochisousama[8C 2]……..”

“Ha!?”

Shidou immediately heard Tohka’s sinking voice coming from the opposite side, and he opened his eyes wide in shock. When he looked over, he found out the food on top of Tohka’s plate has already disappeared.

"Di-did you eat all already……..?"

"……..umu. It was delicious"

Tohka joined her hands while saying that, and made a Gochisousama. But, she was clearly in a state where she was not satisfied.

"Tohka……maybe it isn't enough for you?"

"! The-there is no such thing"

Tohka swing her head in a panicked manner.

But at that moment, [Kuuu--] a puppy barking-like sound echoed from Tohka's stomach.

"……..err, just now"

"Thi-this is enough for me"

Kyuu,*korokorokoro*.

"…….Tohka?"

"I-I told you I am okay!"

Gyuuu,*Gurugurugurugurugu*.

"U-umuu……"

The sound of Tohka's stomach echoed noticeably loud and she made a face looking downwards. Shidou brought his eyebrows closer in suspicion.

"See……as expected it is not enough for you. What happened to you, today?"

When Shidou asked, Tohka took a moment before lifting her face in resignation.

"……there was a [Pull away from a girl that eats more than a guy] show in the television I saw yesterday……."

"Heh……?"

"So……I don't want to be [Pull away] from Shidou, and……"

Tohka narrowed her shoulders in embarrassment. *Haa* Shidou made a relaxed sigh.

"I, prefer girls who eat a lot with energy though"

"! Re-really!?"

"Aah. Rather, I feel sad when food is left behind"

When Shidou said that, Tohka suddenly gasped, and made an energetic nod before standing from her seat.

And after walking through the area with food lined up, she came back with a big plate fully-loaded with delicious looking food. The nearby customers and hall staffs were sending their shocked sights towards them.

"Itadakimasu!"

But, Tohka did not really bother about them and started eating the delicious looking food.

Part 2

"It was the usual Tohka……right?"

3:15pm. Returning back to his home, Shidou called back Tohka's words and actions while checking the time displayed on the screen of his cell phone, and mumbled to himself.

After lunch, Shidou walked around the city and finished his shopping, and he was talking with Tohka the whole time but--------he could not catch sight of any strange points.

Of course, following what Reine said, he tried many ways to stir Tohka up and asked Tohka about things she only knows about. But Tohka, replied all of the question calmly. Thinking normally, she doesn't seem to be disguised from Natsumi.

"As expected, it should be someone else I wonder?"

After Shidou said that to the Incam, Reine's voice replied back from his right ear.

"……. It's still not time to say anything. Anyway, there is no other choice but to believe Natsumi's transforming ability can be broken for now, and continue your actions. It is almost time. We will have you enter the 2nd investigation"

"-------Yes. Who is next? Where should I go……."

"……..Hnn, Shin should just stay there"

"Eh?"

"……the timing is good, and since it piles up on the person's wishes. Since we are at it, I made it so it could be dealt with simultaneously. I think she is going to be there soon-------"

And, right in the middle of Reine's words, *Pin**Pon* the house chime rang.

"Hn? Who is it?"

Even when he looked at the intercom screen, no one was being shown on it. After Shidou tilted his head while walking out the corridor, he walked towards the entranceway and opened the door .

"Yes, who are-------"

"Baaa!"

"Uwah!?"

The moment he twisted the doorknob, something flew out from the door gap towards him and Shidou bend backwards on reflex.

At that occasion the cell phone he was holding slipped of his hands and flew towards the [That] that brought its face out from the entranceway. But after [That] evaded the cell phone with amazing body control, it joined its small arms together skillfully while *Puri**Puri* getting angry.

"Mou--. Shidou-kun. That's dangerous"

When he looked carefully, he found out, it was a puppet imitating a rabbit. It was Yoshino's friend [Yoshinon].

However its form was a little different from the [Yoshinon] he knew about.

That's because, there was a stitched injury on its face, and a giant bolt was pierced into its head. It looks like a cyborg.

"You're Yoshinon…….right?"

"Yes. I am everyone's idol Yoshinon-?"

After saying that, and talk foolishly. *Hou* Shidou sighed. Although it was wearing such an eerie attire, it was still the same [Yoshinon] at heart.

And, when Shidou picked up the cell phone he dropped on the floor, the door opened slowly at that moment and a young girl peeked inside in a scared manner through the gap.-------it was Yoshino. Since Shidou let go of the door knob because he was surprised, only the left hand [Yoshinon] was able to enter.

"Ou, Yoshino too. Sorry. I was a little surprised and the door……"

The opened door opened even further--------and Shidou twitched again once more.

Standing in front the door, Yoshino's attire was the same with [Yoshinon] and different from usual.

A black pointed hat with wide visor, and again a pure black robe. She was also holding a small broom in her right hand. Yes-------Witch attire that looks exactly like Natsumi's Astral Dress Shidou was looking for right now.

"Yo-Yoshino…….that's……"

When Shidou asked, [Yoshinon] poked at Yoshino's cheeks to motivate her.

"Go on go on, Yo-Yoshino"

"U-un…….!"

After Yoshino nodded, she looked up at Shidou as if she made up her mind and moved her lips.

"And, Trick or treat……..."

"Heh?"

Shidou went blank on Yoshino's words for an instant, and immediately *Pon* hit his hand after understanding the meaning.

"Ah, I see. That, is a Halloween costume"

It's true that it was that season. Shidou nodded as if he was convinced.

"Which means…….Yoshinon is a"

"Ufufu, the monster Frankenstein"

Gah! It raised both its hands up and [Yoshinon] threaten him. But nonetheless, even if he was directed with cute round eyes and soft paws, it was lacking intensity.

"……Reine-san, perhaps when you mean that person wishes."

"…….aah, after watching it on television, Yoshino said she wanted to try it once"

"I see……."

Shidou scratched his cheeks from Reine's reply. Speaking specifically, Halloween is on the 31st of October but, well if it was feeling the atmosphere then even now is okay.

Although he was surprised because the silhouette looked like Natsumi but, the cute witch look matches the petite Yoshino.

"Hn, it's cute, Yoshino"

"……..."

When Shidou said that, Yoshino gasped and faced downwards in embarrassment.

And then, *Chon**chon* [Yoshinon] poked his hands.

"Hey hey. I am happy because you praised Yoshino but, are you forgetting something?"

"What…….are you, Ah, candy. Wait a second"

Now that he thinks about it, he had forgotten something important. He walked to the kitchen and looked around the cupboard with candy usually stored in it.

But, the timing was bad and all types of candy were gone. It seems there would be chupa chups if he went to Kotori's room but, if he were to lay his hands on it, he did not know what kind of crazy retribution will be waiting for him later.

"Ah--……sorry. It looks like I have no candy now"

Returning back to the entranceway, after lowering his face apologetically, Yoshino dropped her shoulders depressed.

"Is…… That so"

"I am really sorry. I will properly prepare it next time……."

But, during the time Shidou tried telling her, [Franken Yoshinon] brought its face closer.

"Ou----toou? Now that's a problem Oniii-saan. We are not doing it for fun too you know.------Yoshino! Go on, do it!"

"e……..eeh?"

"Mouu-----. That is why, it is Trick or treat,
I will play a prank on you if you don't give me candy"
Trick or treat

"Ah……"

Yoshino let out her voice as if she remembered something and looked up at Shidou with her big round eyes.

"O-oi…….?"

"Iyaa----, there is no choice since there is no candy. I wonder should I let Shidou-kun fully taste Yoshino's prank"

"Pra-prank……. What are you planning to do?"

When Shidou took a step back and asked, [Yoshinon] made an ominous smile.

"Well that's……..you know"

And with a meaning, it made an eye signal to Yoshino. When it did that, Yoshino's cheeks blushed and she averted her sights.

"No, what are you seriously trying to do!?"

Shidou shouted------and at that moment [Ah] let out a short voice.

"I know. Could the both of you wait in the living room for a while?"

"…….?"

"Ho-eh?"

Yoshino and [Yoshinon] looked at each other in wonder. Shidou beckoned both of them while once again heading back to the kitchen.

He then took out the hot cake mix from the cupboard, took out the milk and eggs from the refrigerator and put it in the bowl after measuring the amount.

"What is it what is it? What are you making Shidou-kun"

"Look forward to it when I finish making it. I will be done soon so wait a bit more"

When Shidou said that, both of them opened their eyes wide in surprise and tilted their heads.

He unintentionally leaked a smile at such a state and after making the non-stick fry pan hot; he dissolved the butter on it and poured in the batter baking it beautifully.

He then piled up two piece of hotcake on a white plate, placed butter on it, and it will be completed if maple syrup was placed on it.

"Okay, it's done. Eat it while it's hot"

Shidou placed the plate on the table after saying that, and Yoshino opened her eyes and mouth wide in surprise before starting to take a very good look at the hot cake.

"This…….I have seen this before on the television…….!"

Yoshino took the fork in her hand and-------twitched her shoulders from remembering something.

"err…….itadakimasu"

"Ou, eat up"

When Shidou said that, Yoshino had [Yoshinon] assist her cutting the hotcake while separating it into mouth size slices, after poking into it with a fork and taking a good look at it, *Paku* she shove it into her mouth.

"…….!"

Yoshino then opened her eyes wide and *Bam**Bam*slammed the table before, giving a good-job sign to Shidou. He saw this once before, it was the reaction Yoshino had when she was moved towards the unknown taste. It would seem she took a liking to it.

"Haha, was it delicious?"

Yoshino *Un**un* nodded from Shidou's words. Towards her state, Shidou's cheeks made a smile unintentionally.

"……..Shin"

And, inside the gentle mood, he could hear Reine's voice coming from his right ear.

"……..Sorry to butt in the good atmosphere but, how is it ? Is there anything strange with Yoshino?"

"Ah……..no, from what I can see, I think there is no strange points……..."

While saying that, Shidou re-fix himself and *Kohon* coughed.

"Now that I think about it, something like this happened before. Ho-ra, that time when Yoshino first came to this house. Eeerr, what did I make that time?"

When Shidou probed indirectly, Yoshino and [Yoshinon] looked at each other once before looking back at Shidou.

"Yes……..if I remember correctly, that time was……..you made Oyakodon"

After saying that, Yoshino made an entranced face.

Although Shidou made a wry smile at Yoshino, he mumbled [Correct] inside his mind.

"Eeh--, what is with that Shidou-kun. Yoshinon has no idea about that though"

And with a face filled with stitch injuries, [Yoshinon] said that in displeasure.

"Hnn? You don't remember?"

When he asked, [Yoshinon] made a thinking gesture for an instant before *Pon* hitting its hands.

"Is it perhaps, that time when Yoshinon was inside Origami-chan's house?"

"Ah…….oh yeah, you weren't with Yoshino at that time"

"That's right……..but even so, taking the opportunity of having Oyakodon[8C 3] with Yoshino when Yoshinon wasn't there, Shidou-kun you pervert! Oh Yoshino, you are such a Cinderella to climb up the stairs of adulthood when Yoshinon wasn't looking… …..wait, Ah-re? Yoshino as a child, who are the parents?"

"Yo-Yoshinon……!"

Tilting its head, [Yoshinon] mouth was pressed by Yoshino whose face was completely red. [Yoshinon] *Bata**Bata* moved its hands.

"Hnnn! Hnnn!"

Even though it was not like it was equipped with respiratory organs but, [Yoshinon] was struggling in pain. Since it looked somewhat pitiful, Shidou called out to Yoshino.

"He-hey, Yoshinon is suffering you know?"

"! Ah……so-sorry, Yoshinon……!"

"*Cough*,*cough*……Fuui……I thought I was going to die……..."

And at that moment, [Yoshinon] tilted its head in wonder.

"Hnn? What's wrong, Yoshinon"

When Shidou asked back, [Yoshinon] skillfully folded its arms and *mumumu*……groaned before, lifting its face.

"Uu—nn, I forgot. It's because I had lack of oxygen when I was pressed by Yoshino. Shidou too, you should be careful when you have a quarrel with Yoshino"

"No-no way……"

After Yoshino's face turned bright red, she *Paku**Paku ate up the remaining hot cakes to hide her embarrassment.

And, after some time passed, [Yoshinon] suddenly twitched its ear and whispered something into Yoshino's ears.

"…….so……that's why……and"

"Eh…….bu-but……."

After Yoshino send her sights to Shidou when she was urged by [Yoshinon], she then pierced through the remaining hot cake with her fork, and extended her hands towards Shidou.

"E-err……. Your share"

"No, you don't have to, it was something I gave you anyways……"

"……"

When Shidou said that, Yoshino distorted her eyebrows into 八 kanji shape in depression.

If Yoshino makes such a face, there is no way he could refuse. Shidou surrendered by slightly lifting both his hands before taking a bite at the hot cake brought out to him while……. paying attention to try his best not to touch the fork with his mouth.

And, while looking at Shidou, [Yoshinon] made a fearless smile.

"Shidou-kun. If Yoshinon's memories are correct, there are people eating hot cake during snack time but, there are people that eat it as breakfast right?"

"Eh? Aah, well, there should be"

"Am I right. Then, isn't it quite questionable move to call this [Candy]?"

"O-Oioi……"

It will be a problem saying that after eating it properly. Shidou made a troubled face and scratched his cheeks.

Like that, Yoshino timidly pointed her fingers towards Shidou's face.

"Er…….. Shidou-san. The side of your lips, there is syrup……there"

"Eh? Really?"

Maybe it was too big a size to stuff his cheeks in one bite. Shidou licked his lips.

"A little more, to this side. Ah……. may I?"

While saying that, Yoshino stood up from her seat, took a piece of wet tissue placed on top of the table and walked closer to Shidou.

"O-ou……"

It's not like he doesn't feel embarrassed but, it was a long-awaited kindness. Even though Shidou's face got hotter, he stopped himself from averting his sights away.

But, after Yoshino extended her hands to Shidou's face--------- she brought her face closer just like that and licked at a spot where Shidou's lips and cheeks won't reach.

"Uwah!?"

It was unpredicted as expected. He twitched his body and jumped aside from that spot.

"Yo,Yo-Yo-Yo-Yo-Yo-Yoshino……..!?"

"Ah,ah-ah-ah-ah-ah err……."

For some reason, in an agitated manner that could compare with Shidou's, Yoshino was flustered while moving her hands hastily. "Thi-this is, err…… hot cake around the middle of candy and rice so……"

Yoshino's continued while her eyes were spinning around.

"It's, a Pr-[Prank]…….!"

Leaving only that, *pata**pata* the sound of footsteps rang and she exited the house.

Left alone, Shidou was dazed for a while before, letting his voice out towards the Incam.

"Re-reine-san…….. Just now, was that really Yoshino……?"

"……Well, I wonder"

What was replied back, was a somewhat hard to decide answer.

Part 3

"Eeer……so, who's next?"

After Yoshino's investigation ended. Shidou asked the Incam. When he did that, not even a few seconds later, Reine's voice replied back.

"……. Aah, the next one is Tonomachi Hiroto"

"Tonomachi huh"

Shidou replied back with a relieved sigh. He was Shidou's friend since way back and the only male within the suspects. Rather than calling it a date, it might be proper to say it is inviting him out to play.

"……your voice sound quite relaxed"

"Ahaha……well, that's because Tonomachi is a guy. If I say it is easy-going then it's going to be easy-going"

"……Hnn, that is good. Then let's finish this swiftly. ------I have already sent a mail to him using your name. It is planned you will be meeting up with him in one hour from now "

"I understand. Where should I meet up with him?" "……aah, that's------"

Shidou twitched his cheeks from hearing Reine's meeting place.

---Around one hour after that.

Shidou and Tonomachi were sitting side by side on the sauna bench.

Yes. The place <Fraxinus> designated as a meeting spot was in front of health land nearby.

"……."

"……."

Few minutes from just now, they were sitting beside each other but, there was completely no conversation……even though he is a friend he was used to playing with, he felt an awkward atmosphere flowing in……one that is more nerve-wrecking compared to when going on dates with a girl.

"He-hey……. Tonomachi"

"……uh!, wha-what is it, Itsuka……"

When Shidou talked to him when he couldn't bear the silence, Tonomachi twitched his shoulders.

"No……somehow……. Sorry"

After Shidou lowered his head a little, he turned away from Tonomachi.

"……Reine-san. Why did you choose such a place……. !?"

He complained to the Incam with a soft voice. <Fraxinus>'s quality high-spec Incam, transmitted Reine's sleepy voice with clear sound quality even though it was in an extremely hot and humid sauna.

"……. Since it is between males. I thought it would be good for a naked socializing"

"What is with that super theory……. Rather isn't the timing too bad. I don't know the details but, didn't Natsumi say something to Tonomachi when she was disguised as me during that time. Rather than calling him very distant, it feels like he is more cautious…….."

"……. By any chance your relationship really turned into something threatening, he won't go on with the invitation"

"No, rather than threatening, he might be suspecting my preferences or strangely suspicious of my motives……."

While saying that, Shidou took a glance at Tonomachi's direction. The reason why his cheeks were blushing, were definitely because the sauna's temperature was high. It has to be that.

And, when Shidou was thinking about that, Reine softly continued.

"……also, this place has a proper meaning for selecting. Natsumi is a female. No matter if she can transform her body; I think there should be some resistance to expose her body in front of a male."

"Ah……..I see"

It's true that what Reine said could be correct. If this Tonomachi was Natsumi, she would probably use some kind of reason to refuse the invitation to go to this health land.

"Then, the moment Tonomachi is here, he isn't Natsumi then?"

"……I think that possibility is high……. Well, unless Natsumi holds some kind of fetish where she would feel excited from exposing her embarrassing parts" "……"

Shidou silently scratched his cheeks. Well, it's true that it can't be a reference if that is the case.

"……..So, what should I do? As expected, it should be appropriate to ask him about old stuff's that Natsumi has no knowledge about"

"…….Aah, that would be the basics. Or one more, I want to see his reaction values. ------can you try touching him a little?"

"Huh…….?"

Shidou went blank. But Reine continued unfazed.

"……..By any chance it is just like what I said, even if Natsumi feels no resistance from exposing her naked body, she should show some reaction when she is touched unexpectedly"

"……ha-haa……."

Having his throat dried from the temperature and nervousness, after Shidou moisten his throat, he looked back at Tonomachi.

And, at the same time, Tonomachi opened his mouth.

"He-hey, Itsuka. Why did you invite me today like this?"

"Eh? No, tha-that's……..."

"…….Shin, now"

When Shidou became timid, he jumped from Reine's instructions.

Although Shidou was bewildered, he followed the instruction by extending his hands and touching Tonomachi's skin as if to embrace his shoulders. -----at that moment,

"Hii!?"

Tonomachi twitched his body and *zazazaza* moved to the side to run away. Looking carefully, his whole body was having Goosebumps.

"Wha-wha-wha-wha-wha-wha-wha-wha-what's wrong Itsuka!?"

"Ah, no……..ou"

"……."

"……."

The awkward silence flowed back once again.

"…….So, how was Tonomachi's reaction?"

"……hn, he is considerably panicked. The moment Shin's hand touched, his nervousness value jumped up."

"Eh, that means……"

"……I want a little more data. Please touch him a few more times."

"Ha-haa……"

He was completely reluctant but, this is also for specifying Natsumi. After Shidou stood up from the bench, he once again sat beside Tonomachi. At that occasion, Tonomachi's shoulders once again trembled.

"I-Itsuka……...we are friends…….right? Persistently a normal one."

"Hn, aah…….. That's right"

"! That's right! Ha-haha…….iyaa--, sorry sorry. Stupid me, I was oddly suspicious of your motives------"

"……..To-u"

At that moment. *petari* Shidou placed his hands on Tonomachi's thighs.

"GiNyaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa!?"

When he did that, Tonomachi raised a loud shout and exited the sauna.

Part 4

"Haa……."

While walking alone in the night street, Shidou made a soft sigh .

Even though he finally entered the baths, none of his tiredness was taken away……..no, rather it feels as if his fatigue increased even more after entering.

But, he could not say that. There should be one more person, one more assignment left for today.

"Errr, having the meeting spot at the park in the highlands is okay right?"

"…….Aah. You are a little late. It's better if you hurry"

"Yes…….!"

Slightly increasing his walking pace and climbing the slope, he hurried to the park meeting spot. The city with the sun fallen was chilly but, it was the perfect temperature for his warmed up body from the bath.

Not long after, he reached the designated park. There was already a girl in front of a bench being shined down by a streetlight.

It was a glamorous girl wearing a long sleeve blouse with a pale design and a black flare skirt. She is the other half of the Yamai sisters---------Yamai Yuzuru.

"Resent. Nice courage to call someone out but end up late."

After saying that, Yuzuru looked at him with half her eyes opened. After Shidou hurried and ran in front Yuzuru, he immediately joined his hands and lowered his head. Well, correctly speaking, it was Reine and the members of <Ratatoskr> that called her instead of Shidou but, there was no way Yuzuru would know that.

"Sorry, Yuzuru. My previous matter got dragged on."

"Remission. Well, it is okay. Yuzuru's heart is big so, I will take it as a 5 minute calculation error."

After saying that, Yuzuri made a sigh and folded her arms.

While looking at that, Shidou felt something out of place and scratched his head.

It's not like there is something wrong with Yuzuru's behavior. In another way, he was influenced by the curiosity regarding the fact that there is only one of the Yamai sisters when there usually are two.

Tentatively, he heard Yuzuru will be the decoration for the last investigation of the first day but, as expected he felt strange looking at her like that. After Shidou sealed their Reiryoku, it won' t be exaggerated to say these sisters are always together leaving only toilet breaks out.

Maybe she guessed Shidou's thought from his sight, Yuzuru shrug her shoulders as if she given up.

"Sigh. Is Yuzuru alone not enough?"

"! No, that is not true. I just thought it is kind of rare……."

"Deny. You don't have to force yourself to make a follow up. Yuzuru and Kaguya is one mind and one body. Rather, that impression proves that Kaguya and Yuzuru is connected."

Yuzuru raised the lips of her lips and made a fearless smile. That's right, today too; it looks like both of the Yamai's are still intimate sisters.

"Question. What is wrong, calling Yuzuru out in this time."

"Ah, no, I thought of, having a talk with both us together……I can't?"

When Shidou asked, Yuzuru opened her eyes wide in surprise.

"Deny. It's not like you can't. But, if that is the case------"

Yuzuru narrowed her eyes and took Shidou's arm; she then brought her body closer to Shidou. Her voluptuous bust was pushing tightly towards his arm.

"Yu-Yuzuru?"

"Hogging. For tonight only, Shidou is Yuzuru's. And, for tonight only, Yuzuru is Shidou's.-------Am I right?"

After saying that, she blew a sweet breath towards his neck. Towards the bewitching wiles that normally can't be imagined from the usual fooling around with Kaguya, Shidou unintentionally turned red.

"Suggestion.--------Shidou, should we walk a bit?"

"Eh?"

When Shidou tilted his head, Yuzuru made a small smile and pulled Shidou.

In a casual pace, they reached the outer edge of the park.

From the spot the highland was placed, the Tenguu city Shidou and the rest that are living in could be looked at in one sweep. Inside the completely dark streets, lights were lighted like glittering stars.

“Admiration.--------It is beautiful.”

“Aah…… thats right.”

And, when Shidou replied honestly, Yuzuru stared at Shidou’s face with half her eyes opened.

“Wha-what is it?”

“Pointing out. When a girl says [It is beautiful], it is decided that estimated reply from the man would be [You are more beautiful]”

“……. Is that the case?”

“Consent. It is the case.”

Where did she get this knowledge from. Yuzuru said it brimming with confidence. Shidou made a wry smile while moving his mouth.

“Yo-you are more……beautiful.”

"Smile……fufu, really?"

When Shidou said that, Yuzuru's cheeks slightly blushed and she made a small smile.

From that cute expression she doesn't really show out normally, his heart beats violently in reflex.

How should he put it……..it was un-calming.

Even if a Spirit has their reiryoku sealed, there are cases where their powers will flow back when their mental state becomes unstable. Because of that, Shidou is often looking after Tohka and the rest after care.

But, the Yamai sisters Kaguya and Yuzuru, since they are very stable as long as they are together, they are spirits that he doesn't really have to take care of. In reality, in opposing to Tohka transferring to the same class as Shidou, both of the Yamai sisters entered the class next door together. Speaking in the unvarnished truth, the feeling of the Yamai sisters as a [Friend] are stronger than Tohka, Yoshino and the rest.

But-------no, that is the reason why, talking to Yuzuru alone like this feels very refreshing……Shidou's heart was oddly noisy.

"Calling.------Shidou."

Yuzuru softly let out her voice.

"Hnn……what is it?"

When Shidou replied, Yuzuru *gulp* gulped before continuing the rest.

“Petition. Please answer this honestly.”

“A-aah……so, what is it?”

“Question. Shidou--------between Kaguya and Yuzuru, who do you like more?”

“Eh……?”

He became blank, from the unexpected question. Shidou felt sweat oozing down his forehead.

“Wh-why so……...”

Even when he let out a trembling voice, Yuzuru was staring fixed at Shidou and won’t move her sights. Those eyes, doesn’t look like she was joking nor she was she making fun of him.

“Tha-that kind of thing, I can’t choose even if you ask so suddenly. Both sides……are important to me.”

When Shidou said that, Yuzuru shrug her shoulders as if she is tired.

“Scorn. My goodness. You picked the weakest and most pitiful answer there is.”

“Shu-shut up, how can I answer you when you asked me so suddenly!”

"Confirming. Then, if Yuzuru gives you a period of time to prepare, will you answer then?"

"Uh……..."

He faltered from Yuzuru's words. Towards that Shidou, Yuzuru once again made a sigh.

Towards that Yuzuru, Shidou scratched his head while replying back.

"Then, which one do you want me to choose?"

"Considering……let's see..."

Yuzuru placed one finger on her chin to show she was in thought. After she did that, she once again looked back at Shidou.

"Reply.---------If Shidou chooses Kaguya, Yuzuru will praise you good boy good boy. If Shidou chooses Yuzuru, then Yuzuru will get angry."

After saying that, she made a mischievous smile.

Now that he thinks about it, Kaguya and Yuzuru were this type of girls. They love the other half much more than themselves. He mixed in a sigh and leaked out [……..thanks for the reference].

"Addition. But, if Shidou chooses Yuzuru……I will be happy."

"Eh------"

But, Shidou felt his heartbeat beating violently from the words that came out from Yuzuru as a continuation.

Since they are glued together like this, there might be chance Yuzuru might find out. After Shidou swing his head to the sides, he continued his words to trick her.

"S-so in the end, which one is it?"

"Sigh. Just like what you heard. Yuzuru don't mind for both answers. But even so, that chicken answer. Yuzuru is disappointed at Shidou. Such a useless person."

"Uguh……."

He could not reply anything back since he was told like that. He bit his lips and made a groan.

However, Yuzuru did not bother about that, and [But] added more.

"Petition. ---------if. Only if. If Kaguya asks the same thing to Shidou like what Yuzuru asked right now……..at that time, Shidou must definitely answer [Kaguya]."

"Eh, that's……"

Shidou could not finish his words, and Yuzuru continued.

"Predict. Kaguya will definitely get angry. **Why didn't you choose Yuzuru!** Like that……but, inside her heart, she will be happy until she can't stand it."

"Yuzuru……."

"Convinced. Kaguya is *often like that* but, she really loves Shidou . There is no mistake since Yuzuru says this. Yuzuru and Kaguya was original from one body and one soul. What Yuzuru hates, Kaguya also hates. Similarly---------what Yuzuru loves, Kaguya also loves."



"Eh, that means……"

When Shidou twitched his eyebrows, Yuzuru opened her eyes a little wider. And while placing her hands on her mouth to cover it, she separated from Shidou and took some distance.

"Careless. That was unnecessary information. In order to prevent saying anymore, Yuzuru will be running away now."

"Ah, oi, Yuzuru!?"

When Shidou called her name, Yuzuru turned around and made a smile.

"Petition. Yuzuru did not lie. Kaguya really has a liking to Shidou. That's why--------Please take care of Kaguya."

After Yuzuru said that, she lowered her head and ran into the dark night just like that.

Part 5

"…….So, you let her go back alone just like that? Haaa ……. At least send her back to the mansion properly."

While reclining on the sofa, Kotori made a given up sigh.

Shidou, Kotori and Reine were currently assembled inside the Itsuka house. Shidou was made to seiza on the flooring, Kotori was in front of him and Reine was sitting in a sofa beside them, as if gazing at both of them.

Left alone in the park, Shidou had no choice but to return home and around that time, Kotori and Reine was already standing by in the living room and the lecture time immediately began.

"To let a girl walk in the streets at night alone, that isn't a choice I can really admire."

"Guh…….. Sorry"

It's true now that she mentioned about it. But, during the time Shidou was dumbfounded, Yuzuru descended the slope with tremendous speed. As expected from a wind spirit. Catching up to her was impossible instead.

"…….Well, he can't help it in that situation. Shin did a good job."

Reine probably knew about the situation from observing from the <Fraxinus>, and a life-saving boat came from the side.

Kotori *fuun* exhaled and made the rod of the chupa chups she was eating stand up.

"I know that. Even I understand it is a hard schedule"

She sends her sights towards Shidou while saying that.

"-----so, Shidou. After talking with 4 people today, did you notice something different? Tohka, Yoshino, Tonomachi, Yuzuru. Inside these people----------is there someone you think is Natsumi? "

"……."

Being asked that, Shidou recalled back the events that happened today and immersed in thoughts.

Honestly, it was still in the stage of one third of the suspects investigated. It's true that, there was some he doubted when he tried doubting but, he can't decide on which one could be the criminal now.

"……I still don't know. Anyway, I have to check everyone."

"Well……. That's true."

It seems Kotori also predicted that answer. She opened her eyes half-way and made a sigh.

"I will check all of their voice tone just in case so, I will tell you if there is something."

"Aah……. I am counting on you"

"Well anyways. Please rest for today to prepare for tomorrow. I won't forgive you if things become like, tomorrow morning's arrangement got disorder because of insufficient sleep"

Kotori said that while switching her folded leg with the other. Shidou stood up from the spot and made a nod.

"Aah, that's true. I'll do that.------Reine-san what time does it start on tomorrow?"

"…….hnn, the first one is arranged on 10am. Sorry but, give up on school tomorrow."

"The situation is like this so it can't be helped. So eeerrr, the first partner would be……"

"……. It will be Kotori"

"…….uh!"

Reclining on the sofa, Kotori twitched her shoulders. At that moment, Reine noticed something and *pon* hit her hand.

"…….aah, I see. No wonder you were so desperate in telling him not to oversleep tomorrow-------"

"---------! It's not like that! As a commander I------"

She noticed Shidou's sights at his point. Kotori threw a cushion at him.

"Uwah, oi, what are you doing?"

"Shut up! Get to sleep already!"

Shouting, Kotori grabbed another cushion.

He can't stand it if he receives another attack. Shidou hurried and retreated to his room.

Part 6

---*click* such a sound was produced, and the clock's long needle and short needle pointed at 12 at the same time.

12am the 22nd of October ended and the 23rd of October started .

Yes. Which means--------the first day of the game has ended.

"Fufu……."

Inside the darkness. Natsumi transformed as [Someone], made a very soft laugh.

The first day. Shidou could not say who Natsumi was disguised as.

Nonetheless, that can't be helped. Since there are over 10 suspects, and the rules was also vague. Because there is a difference in standard, it's obvious how much he can do on the first day.

But, no matter what reason there may be, the first day of the game has ended.

"----------<Haniel>. It's time"

When Natsumi muttered that in a voice no one could hear, she twitched her fingertips.

All Natsumi has to do is that. <Haniel> will complete the job because of Natsumi's intention next.

"Well then…….. First off, one person. Can you guess me properly?"

*kusu**kusu*.

The witch sneered.

"-----before, everyone disappears"

Part 7

"Hn……."

Morning. From the ruckus shaking his eardrums, Shidou made a light stretch on his bed before scratching his eyes.

He extended his hands to the pillow side while making a big yawn and pressed the alarm clock's switch. But--------the sound didn't stop even when he done that. It would seem the sound that disrupted Shidou's quiet sleep from just now was not from the alarm.

"Ah-re….?"

He raised his sluggish body and made one more yawn. Together with him regaining his consciousness gradually, he grasped the identity of the sound, yes, this was……..the chime's sound. The Itsuka house chime was *Pin*Pon**Pin*Pon* being continuously rang.

"What is going on, early in the morning like this……..."

After Shidou grumbled while getting of his bed, he descended down the stairs and went across the corridor. Even during that time, the chime has been ringing non-stop.

But, around the time Shidou reached the entranceway, the mysterious visitor might have gotten impatient and started *Gacha **Gacha* sounding the doorknob after passing through the gate.

"Uoou…….!?"

It was still bearable since it was morning but, it would be a light horror if it was deep at night. Shidou let out his voice in fear.

"Wh-who is it…….?"

"! Shidou"

When he did that, the voice of an agitated girl could be heard from the opposite side of the door. It was a high-pitched sound he was familiar with---------it belongs to Kaguya.

"Kaguya? What's going------"

When Shidou unlocked the entranceway, Kaguya jumped at him with sweat oozing out her forehead.

“Uoou, oi, calm down! What happened!”

“Shi-Shidou! Did Yuzuru come over here!?”

Forgetting her usual proud tone, Kaguya shouted. Shidou tilted his head in suspicion.

“Yuzuru……? No, she didn’t come…….what’s wrong?”

“Sh-she is not here…….when I woke up in the morning, I couldn't find Yuzuru anywhere!”

“What did you say…….!?”

From Kaguya’s shout, Shidou brought his eyebrows closer and replied.

---it appears from this moment, Natsumi’s [Game] might have finally started.

High risk

Chapter 4:Suspect Designation

Part 1

"……..."

"……..."

While sitting beside each other on the park bench, Shidou and Kotori were silently gazing at the fountain.

No, in correct words, it's not like they were gazing. The fountain was just in front of them that's all. Shidou was pressing his elbow on his knees and bending his back while, Kotori was folding her legs together and leaning her body on the back of the chair while, quietly immersed in thoughts.

The time was 11:30am. Maybe it was a weekday; there were only housewives with their children and an old man taking a stroll in the park. Inside them, there was a young man and girl sitting on the bench quietly that stands out, occasionally there would be some wives sending their sights over to them.

But right now, Shidou and Kotori have no leisure to bother about such sights.

Although that is something only normal. That's because------this morning, Yamai Yuzuru has suddenly disappeared.

And, after some time passed, Kotori suddenly let out her voice.

"…….hey. Say something……..This is still a date tentatively"

"Ah-aah……that's right"

Being told that by Kotori, Shidou made a short sigh and pulled his cheeks to pull himself together.

Yes. Right now, although the time was a little late, Shidou and Kotori attended the date that was planned originally.--------right now, that was the only thing he could do.

"Ah--……and……."

But, even if he tried to say something clever, no words came out immediately.

When he did that, Kotori made a sigh as if she was irritated.

"Feels absent-minded……well, that isn't shocking"

"…….sorry"

After Shidou scratched his head, he blew out the irritation and powerlessness lurking in his lungs as a long sigh…… naturally, even if he blew it out, It's not like any of them cleared out.

Shidou made a sullen face while recalling back the image he saw in <Fraxinus> just now.

Going back in time to 10am. Reine visited the Itsuka house with Shidou and Kotori in it.

From what he knew, it seems she knew about the case regarding Yuzuru's disappearance. But, since it was better not to let Kaguya know about it, Kaguya, and also, Tohka, Yoshino will be made to stand-by in one room in the next door mansion.

"So……. Reine-san, where on earth did Yuzuru disappear to?"

When Shidou asked, Reine made a small nod before moving her lips.

"……Lets start talking from the beginning. First from Kaguya's talk, Yuzuru returning back the mansion room last night was confirmed. There is no mistake there right?"

"Yes. It's true she said that"

He recalled back the talk he heard from Kaguya just now while agreeing.

It's true that, Kaguya saw Yuzuru coming back from outside last night. Since she said she was tired, it looks like they did not talk with each other but, she saw her taking her bath and entering her bed.

Which means-------Yuzuru disappeared between the few hours from night to morning.

"……..Look at this"

After saying that, Reine deployed the terminal on top of the table. When she did that, the image of a room that is thought to be a room in the mansion was displayed.

It was familiar scenery. It was Kaguya and Yuzuru's bedroom they are living in. There are two beds placed side by side in the back of the room and two-similar looking girls were sleeping.

"Is it okay to take something like this?"

"…….Aah. The Yamai sister's room isn't the only one. Inside the room of all the suspects Natsumi might possibly disguise as, has an automated camera launched in it. I thought maybe, she would expose herself in a place where no one was looking"

After Reine said that, she once again operated the terminal. When she did that, the image of the Yamai sister being shown on the screen, started replaying in fast-forward. The clock in the room was spinning round and round and consequently both of their sleeping posture became hectic.

"……..it's almost time"

After saying that, Reine pressed the key near her hands and the fast-forward replay turned back to normal.

Not long later, the needle of the clock pointed at 12am. When that happened---------

"Wha……"

"What is it……"

Shidou and Kotori voice piled on top of each other.

The main monitor was showing the Yamai sister's bedroom. When the center of the room distorted, a broom appeared from the empty space.

"That's------<Haniel>……..?"

Yes. That's Natsumi angel <Haniel> he saw a few days ago.

<Haniel> slowly opened its tip and exposed a mirror surfaced interior.

And then, after the mirror shined.

Sleeping on the bed, Yuzuru's body made a pale glow and was sucked into the glass.

"…….! Yuzuru!?"

Naturally, this happened inside the video. Shidou's shout was useless and Yuzuru's shadow and shape disappeared.

And like that, <Haniel> which sucked Yuzuru into it slowly closed its tip and dissolved into the empty space.

"…….just like what you see"

Reine turned her chair around and faced Shidou.

"……Yuzuru was kidnapped by Natsumi through <Haniel >. Most likely, the real [Someone] Natsumi is disguised as, disappeared the same way"

"I-is Yuzuru alright……!? And the [Someone] Natsumi is disguising as too……!"

When Shidou asked, Reine made a difficult face and looked downwards.

"……I want to think they are safe but, I can't say anything in the current situation"

Reine said in a soft voice. Shidou has no idea where to let out his anger and irritation swirling inside his head, and scratched his head violently.

"I, what should I……!"

"……..there is only one thing you can do. It is to find Natsumi from the suspects as fast as possible"

"That's the case"

As if to match up with Reine's words, Kotori took out the chupa chups she was licking out of her mouth, and looked towards Shidou.

"We have no time-------let's start with my date[War]"

And, while making a sharp look, she said that.

Turning back time in the Tenguu eastern park.

When Shidou was recalling back the event that happened in < Fraxinus>, Kotori sitting beside him stood up on the spot and after walking a few steps, she made an imposing pose as if to separate the fountain with Shidou's sights.

"Kotori…….?"

"touu!"

When Shidou lifted his face, Kotori launched a sharp chop on the crown of his head.

"Ouch! Wha-what was that for Kotori!"

"Don't make such a gloomy face. Did you think Yuzuru would come back if you worry?"

"Tha-that kind of…….!"

Shidou raised his voice and--------swung his head as if he thought back again.

"……..no, it's just like what you say, Kotori. Now is not the time to be doing this"

When Shidou said that, Kotori *Fuun* exhaled while making the rod of the chupa chups she put in her mouth stand up.

"It's good you understand. Nothing will be concluded if all you do is worry.-------all the more now, since she added her own rule without notifying us. No…….rather than calling it added, the details were revealed, putting that way is more natural I wonder?"

Kotori distorted her eyebrows in detest.

The rule that was revealed. There is no mistake; it is about the phenomenon that happened to Yuzuru last night.

"[Before everyone disappears]……that last part written on the card, was probably referring to this as expected"

"Should be.------this will be my speculation from now on though……most likely, one person from the suspects will disappear through <Haniel> each time a day progresses. And, once all 12 suspects disappears except the [Someone] Natsumi is disguised as, Natsumi wins. If Shidou finds Natsumi before then, then Shidou wins"

Kotori made one finger stand while lining up her thoughts. It's true that, if the literature on Natsumi's sent letter was treated the way as it is then, it would be the case.

"……I wonder if I really can find Natsumi"

"I don't want to hear your complaints. Now that Yuzuru disappeared, there are 11 suspects left including me. There is only around 10 days left"

"Aah…….that's true"

Shidou made a big nod from Kotori's words.

After that, for a while------ they became silent again.

When that happened, Kotori let out her voice as if she was irritated.

"……..so, Shidou"

"Hnn? What's wrong?"

"There is around 30 minutes left until the next schedule though "

"Eh? A-ah……"

When Shidou made a vague reply, Kotori distorted her mouth to the shape of a へ character.

"That's why I am saying if it is okay not to investigate me or not "

"Ah……..."

When she said that, Shidou opened his eyes wide.

That's right. He has forgotten about it until now but, the Kotori in front of him right now, might be the fake disguised from Natsumi.

Naturally, Shidou does not want to doubt his cute sister who just encouraged him just now. But, by any chance the commander

of <Ratatoskr> Kotori was a fake then; the damage would be much more serious compared to anyone else has. For the future, he has to prove Kotori's innocence right now.

"Let's see, then, I'll ask a few questions……"

"……over here?"

"Eh?"

"……..although it has the title of an investigation but, this is still a date, tentatively"

Shidou [Ah……..] scratched his cheeks from Kotori's words.

He remembered the conversation he had with Reine and Kotori last night.

That's right. He was at wit's end because of the strange situation of Yuzuru disappearing but, this was a date. Just because Kotori understands the situation, there is no way he can end it with just practical questions.

After Shidou made a small sigh, he stood up from the bench and extended his hand to Kotori.

"----------That's right. Let's walk a little I guess"

"……..hnn"

In a disappointed way, however with a little blush on her face, Kotori took Shidou's hand, and stood up from the bench.

And, while having their hands linked, they slowly walked to the outer edge of the park.

"Somehow……..it's been a long time since we walked together like this"

"Hnn……that's true"

"I'll ask just in case, do you remember the place of the date on June?"

"Of course. Ocean park"

"Haha……correct"

When Kotori said that, Kotori *fuun* exhaled.

"But, if by any chance I am Natsumi, these types of question might be meaningless"

"Eh? What do you mean"

"Try thinking about it. Although I am prohibited from boarding the <Fraxinus>, I have a rough idea of the investigation's objectives. I think it is only natural to investigate about the past"

After saying that, Kotori raised the side of her lips. Sweat flowed down Shidou's cheeks.

"O-oioi, give me a break from the jokes"

"It would be nice if it was a joke.------well just in case, about that , you know……..with a method that is not influenced with things like that, isn't there something we should check out?"

Kotori said that while averting her sights for some reason.

"? What method is it"

"For example, something like trying it ……in order to see my reaction"

"Try it? Try what?"

"Tha-that's…….well you know, errr, that…….Ki,…….ki------"

"-------ah"

Shidou had something that comes to mind, and his eyebrows jumped up.

Luckily----------Shidou had an idea what that method was.

"----------Kotori, can you close your eyes for a while?"

"! Ah……..u-un……."

When Shidou said that, Kotori closed her eyes with her cheeks slightly blushing.

"……..Touu"

Taking the chance, Shidou brought both his hands closer to Kotori's head and----------stole the black ribbon tying her hair.

"Fu……..fuee------!?"

Maybe she noticed the strange feeling of her tied hair touching her shoulders, Kotori raised a hysteric voice.

She then *peta*peta* touched her head in panic and when she found out her ribbon was not there-----

"U-uwaaaaaaah!?"

And, while having teary eyes, she jumped towards Shidou who stolen her ribbon.

"O-Onii-chan! What are you doing! Give it back! Give it back!"

Kotori shouted with a tearful voice while *pyon**pyon* hopping to get back the ribbon Shidou was holding. Completely from the oppressive Miss Commander from just now, she had aspects which were similar and yet not similar.

Kotori usually put her mindset into strong. When she puts on the black ribbon, she can maintain her [Strong-self]. In the opposite , if she takes off that ribbon, and put on the white ribbon, she will transform into an innocent and cute sister mode.

---which means, like this.

"Onii-chan! Onii-chan!"

"……"

He has finished confirming but, since he did not see white mode Kotori recently, Kotori hopping up like a rabbit was unbearably cute. He lowered the ribbon in front of Kotori and when Kotori jumps up, he calculated that timing and lifts his hands, he repeated this several time.

"U……uu……."

At first Kotori was desperate to take back the ribbon but, not long later her face started getting mushy while, *Zuu**zuu* slurping her nose.

"So-sorry sorry. Here you go, Kotori"

It might have been too much as expected. After thinking like that, Shidou handed over the ribbon and with amazing speed, Kotori snatched it away and tied her hair into two.

And then, *Yurari*……, she lifts her face, and directs a sharp glint towards Shidou.

"Shidou……why you…….."

"N-no! That's great that's great. It looks like Kotori is the real one!"

Just now was a method he used to confirm if she was real or not to the end, he raised his voice as if to emphasis that.------but, Kotori looks like she could not hear any of it.

"Ko-Kotori? Calm down------"

"No excusesssssss!"

Added with a superb twist, Kotori's straight right pierced towards Shidou's face.

Part 2

"…….Shidou, what is with your face……."

The date with Kotori ended and after he reached to the next spot, Kaguya waiting over there was looking at Shidou's face doubtfully while raising her eyebrows.

Nonetheless, it might be something normal. Receiving Kotori's merciless retributions, Shidou's cheeks were swelling red and a rolled up tissue was thrust into his nose to stop his nose bleeding …….at least, it was not a face for attending a date.

"No……..I kind of was attacked by a boxer in the street corner when I was on the way here"

"I-I see……."

Kaguya was clearly making an unbelieving face but, maybe she guessed the situation somehow, she did not pursue any more than that.

Incidentally, Kaguya was right now wearing, a shirt with alphabets, crosses and a skull design on it, a bottom with many

chains and belts attached; it was the so called gothic style. From what he heard, during that time when Reine brought her to buy clothes and daily necessities, she fell in love with it in first sight and bought it immediately.

"Fuun……but even so, I was shocked on that matter during the morning. You should have informed me beforehand that it was an inspection, that's common sense"

And, while making an unneeded cool pose, *Fuu* she brushed her bangs upwards. That face right now has no traces of the panicked and even tearful Kaguya from this morning.

That's because, she was explained by Reine that Yuzuru will be sent to the <Fraxinus> headquarters temporarily for inspection.

It was somehow a lame excuse but……..it looks like she believed it.

"Somehow…..she looked more lively than I thought, that Kaguya"

"……..It would be nice if that is the case"

After Shidou made a sigh while saying that in a soft voice, Reine replied back with a difficult voice.

"Eh?"

Even though he tried asking back-------Shidou's words, were cut off by Kaguya's unsatisfied voice.

"Oi, are you listening Shidou. It is blasphemy failing to listen to my words. Know that imprudent fellows like that will be burned in hell fire, and dropped into the depths"

"Aah…….sorry sorry. I'll tell you that I will be careful from now on"

"Okay. Do that and it's good.--------so, how long does Yuzuru's inspection or whatever is it called takes?"

"Eh? A-ah…….since we are talking about the headquarters so, it should be about 10 days……."

Shidou thought about it for a while, and then replied.

10 days. That's the time limit of Natsumi's game he was able to think of in the current situation.

Now that he thinks about it, finding Natsumi no matter what before the time limit ends and save Yuzuru, that might be an expression of his determination he made unconsciously.

"Fuu—n"

After Kaguya distorted her face in boredom from Shidou's answer, she said that with a soft voice.

But, after immediately making a cough, she once again sends her sights to Shidou in a posed angle.

"Kuku, that is quite slow. Pray as much as possible that I won't get tired"

"Ou……..that's true. I will ask them to finish it as fast as possible.

"Umu, excellent.---------so, Shidou"

After Shidou nodded, she made a beautiful turn and then*piin*! She pointed towards the building behind her. On the roof of the big white building, there was a giant bowling pin soaring on it.

Yes. The place <Ratatoskr> designated for the date with Kaguya was a bowling alley which is a 15 minutes' walk from the Tenguu station.

"When I thought it was sudden, it looks like you want to have a match with me"

"No, It's not like I want to have a match……."

"Kuku, I'll buy that courage but don't you think you are too reckless? I am the child of the hurricane, Yamai Kaguya! There is no chance you would win!"

Even when Shidou scratched his cheeks and said that, it looks like Kaguya did not hear it. She took an oddly cool pose while saying that. Even without Yuzuru, her love for matches is still going strong.

Well, he doesn't mind if that would help her loneliness with Yuzuru even if it was a little. After Shidou made a sigh, he entered the bowling alley with Kaguya.

They then borrowed the shoes and ball from the counter, and walked to the lane they were registered to.

And at that moment, Kaguya pulled at Shidou's sleeves.

"Wai-wait Shidou. Look at that"

While her eyes were oddly sparkling, Kaguya pointed towards the back of the counter. Shidou twisted his head while sending his sight to the direction she was pointing to.

It was the shop corner with various bowling products lined up. The shoes, ball that Shidou and Kaguya borrowed and the bag for storing all those were being displayed inside the showcase.

For an instant, he was about to say the rental goods were enough but-------he immediately understood the reason why Kaguya pointed there.

Beside the ball, there were excessively cool protectors used by pro bowlers in their dominant hands lined up there…….. what's more, it seems it was not for rental.

"……I have no choice"

After Shidou made a soft sigh, he brought his legs to the shop counter; he then purchased a protector for females and handed it to Kaguya.

"Here, try it on"

"U-Uoooh!"

After Kaguya's cheeks were blushed from excitement, she quickly put on the protector on her dominant hand.

"This is the legendary, Armguard (Fegefeuer gauntlet) of purgatory……..!"

"Is it legendary…….?"

"Kuku, is this okay Shidou? Giving me a divine weapon like this. It was a match with obvious results but, you just made an even bigger overwhelming gap you know?"

After Kaguya said that, she made a stance with the arm wearing the protector before, changing her shoes in a good mood and walked towards the lane. He shrugged his shoulders as if he had given up and followed her.

"Well, let us begin. I'll specially allow you to have the first move. Kuku, good luck struggling!"

"Yeah yeah……..and here goes"

After saying that, Shidou took the ball in his hand and walked towards the lane with the pin set up, Kaguya then raised her voice as if to stop him from advancing.

"Wait! I know, I thought of something good"

"Hnn….? What is it?"

"A normal match is too boring. Why don't we make one bet.----------the one who loses the match will have to obey the winner for one request, how about that?"

"Eeehh….what is that condition"

When Shidou made an unpleasant face, Kaguya made a fearless smile while covering half her face with the hand wearing the protector in a cool manner. "Kuku, what is it? Did you suddenly get scared of defeat after all this time?"

"No, rather than defeat, i just don't want to be made to……"

And, when Shidou was about to talk back while having sweat flowing down his cheeks, he could hear Reine's voice coming from his right ear.

"……..well, It should be alright. If it is an aberrant request then, we will stop her"

"……."

Haa, he made a sigh and looked back at Kaguya.

"I get it. ------in exchange, if you add such a condition then, even I will get serious then"

When Shidou said that, Kaguya *nii* lifted the side of her lips in a happy manner.

"Kakaka! This turned interesting! Alright, show me that so-called seriousness of yours! I will take it down easily!"

"You said it…….look closely"

After Shidou made his sights sharp, he threw the ball with a beautiful form.

The 13 point purple ball rolled straight down the lane-------and hit the center of the pins lined up into a V shaped. The pins made a nice sound and continuously fall down; the crystal screen installed above the lane then displayed a mark signifying a strike.

"Alright! How about that!"

"Hohou, not bad! it won't be interesting if that weren't the case! "

"Fufu, that's because I occasionally come bowling with Tonomachi. I won't lose that easily"

After saying that, he folded his arms together proudly.

However, Kaguya didn't looked a little disarrayed at all, she then took the orange ball and slowly walked to the front of the lane.

"Kuku, look at this carefully. The hurricane child's hurricane. And then, understand it. The fact on how powerless you are……!"

Kaguya said that and swung the hand holding the ball,

“Special move! Dunkelheit Windhose-------!!”

When she shouted a mysterious skill name, the ball slammed on the lane filled with energy. *Goo*! Such a heavy sound was produced and caused a slight tremor to the surroundings.

“Oi oi Kaguya, do you know how to bowl----------“

And, when he was telling that to her while making a tired sigh, Shidou stopped his words there.

The ball slammed on the floor by Kaguya was * gyagyagyagyagya*! Started advancing forward with tremendous energy after making a sound that is produced by car tires when it suddenly takeoffs. He has no idea how she did it but, a proper revolution was added to it.

While making smoke and rampaging on the lane, the ball easily blew off the pin lined up ahead.

On the crystal screen of 3 lanes, the strike mark appeared at the same time.

“Did you see that! My definite kill, the Dunkelheit Windhose!”

“You’re joking oi!?”

“Kaka, a game like this, I have already finished it with Yuzuru last time! This special move I polished to the extreme, I’ll show this to you nicely!”

After Kaguya made a turn and send her sights to Shidou, she made a confident smile.

---After around 1 hour. Shidou was completely defeated.

Although he succeeded in stopping Kaguya in counting the strikes made in the neighboring lanes, it was just a temporary peace of mind. Shidou's score is by any chance not bad but, from the continuous special moves Kaguya made, an uncrossable difference was made when the game is only half-way done.

"Kuku, it looks like it's my win! Well, I'll praise you for fighting well!"

"…….I'm flattered"

When Shidou raised both his hands to show he given up, Kaguya made a satisfied nod and made a fearless smile before folding her arms together.

"Well then, you probably did not forget this. The contract we exchanged before our sacred battle"

"I remember it clearly…….so? What do you want me to do ?"

When Shidou said that, Kaguya suddenly looked serious and started examining the surroundings nearby.

"Hn? What's wrong?"

"……..the [Ki] flowing here is bad, because of the ley line . We are changing the place"

After saying that, Kaguya took Shidou's hands, and walked heavily deeper into the building like that.

"O-oi, where are we going"

"It's okay so keep quiet and follow me.-------oh, just nice. I'll choose there I guess"

The place Kaguya pointed was a resting spot with vending machines lined up there. She pointed deeper in, at the bench hidden under the shadows of the vending machines.

"Sit over there"

"A-aah……..."

He was anxious and what was Kaguya thinking about but, Shidou has no right to refuse right now. He quietly sat on the bench like he was told.

After that, Kaguya silently sat beside Shidou before, changing her face completely into a serious one like just now and quietly moved her lips.

"…….alright then, I will command you. Listen carefully"

"Wha-what is it……..?

He raised his eyebrows while sweat was oozing down his forehead, from the weird situation. When he did that, Kaguya stared at Shidou while continuing on.

"--------right now for 10 minutes, vow that you will not be surprised in what I do no matter what, won't be disarrayed, and also will not refuse at all. And also, swear that you will never tell anyone on what happens during that time"

"Eh……..?"

"Swear!"

Kaguya said that in a stronger tone. Shidou reflexively nodded from that bloodcurdling intensity.

"I-I get it……"

"Okay"

After Kaguya made a small nod, she did not say anything for a while------

When he thought her upper body dropped from the side, she placed her head on top of Shidou's thighs.

"……!?"

He let out his voice by groaning from that sudden action but, he withstood it at the very end. Right now, he promised he won't be surprised, disarrayed----and also won't refuse.

"Kuku, well isn't this comfortable to sleep on. I don't mind hiring you as a full-time pillow if you cry and beg you know?"

"Yo-you……"

"Houu? Is a loser going to disobey me?"

"Guh……."

When Shidou raised his eyebrows regretfully, Kaguya *kara** kara* laughed in a good mood.

"Kaka, pleasant pleasant. Slave, pat my head while you are at it "

"……as you wish"

Shidou made a sigh as if he given up before, nodding Kaguya's head and combing Kaguya's hair with his fingers as a comb. Kaguya relaxed her cheeks from being ticklish, and twisted her body.

"Ga--!"

And maybe she thought of something, after Kaguya turned the direction of her body was facing, she wraped her arms around Shidou and *gyuu* inserted strength in it.

"Wai……."

"……I told you not to get disarrayed"

"Uh……..."

It is true, now that he thinks about it. When the inside of Shidou 's mind was quietly being in disarray, Kaguya did not move from that posture for a while.

"Ka-Kaguya……..?"

And, after some time has passed, Shidou tried calling out to her in fear.

"…….Uu,uah……"

Kaguya started leaking soft sobs.

"Ka-Kaguya……?"

"……Kuh, u,u……..u,…….Yuzuru…….. Yuzuru…….uh"

And then. Shidou suddenly gasped, from the soft name he heard mixed inside Kaguya's sobbing.

"Kaguya, You, Yuzuru's----------"

After Shidou said that unintentionally, Kaguya slurped her nose before, letting out a shaking voice.

"…….You, can't find Yuzuru right……..I know that much. Don't take me as an idiot"

"Tha-that's------"

But, Kaguya continued.

"……it's better if I don't know right……then, I'll believe you. That's because, Shidou was the one who gave me and Yuzuru the 3rd choice at that time……."

"Kaguya……."

"That's why…….please. Yuzuru……Yuzuru----------"

"……."

Shidou clenched his teeth tightly, and gently placed his hand on Kaguya's head.

---10 minutes after that.

Just like what she proclaimed at first, Kaguya stopped crying exactly at that time and during the time they got out from the shadow of the vending machine, the situation completely turned back to what it was from just now.

It was a self-restraint worthy to be shocked at. When Shidou patted her head and [You did great] said that, Kaguya blushed while answering [……..shut up].

Part 3

After finishing bowling and sending Kaguya back to the mansion, a transmission was sent in by <Fraxinus> as if it was estimated.

"……..hn, good work, Shin"

"No…….more importantly, Reine-san"

When Shidou tried to talk about just now, Reine [……..Aah] and continued.

"…..I am sorry for it being immediate but, we have no time. We will have you set off to the next date"

"I understand. I will……..definitely find Natsumi. And then, I will send Yuzuru back to Kaguya"

Shidou clenched his fist as if he made a new resolution.

It's not like he was relaxed until now. But, it was reality that his feelings gotten stronger from the date with Kaguya. As expected, the 2 Yamai sisters have to be together. No matter who it is, he won't forgive them for separating those 2.

"……good. Okay, now head to the next target area. It's the coffee shop in front of the Tenguu station's eastern gate. Like usual, we used your name to invite the target to a date. She should be there in around 30 minutes"

"Yes. Who is next?"

"…….aah, your classmate Yamabuki Ai"

Shidou twitched his eyebrows from Reine's words.

Yamabuki Ai. She is one of the famous female trios in Shidou's class. Now that he thinks about it, she is also one of the suspects.

But, the one they are close with was Tohka and not Shidou, so he has never talked to her on his own before.

Incidentally, during the time Natsumi was disguised as Shidou, it seems she laid her fingers on the trios in some ways and they are very wary of Shidou. Honestly, she is an annoying opponent in a different direction from Tonomachi's.

"……..I might be asking an awkward question but, how did you invite her?"

"…….hnn? Well, unlike Tohka, Yoshino and the rest, I didn't use the method of inviting her in substitute for you. During the day time today, I left a letter inside her shoe rack in school"

"Le-letter…….? What is the content?"

"…….[Yamabuki Ai-sama. There is something I want to tell when we are alone. After school, on 6pm I will be waiting in the coffee shop in front of the station. Itsuka Shidou]"

"……Uoo……."

Shidou raised a groan while pressing his forehead, from the sentence Reine was mentioning plainly.

Somehow……it was a content that would completely bring in misunderstandings……no, as long as he takes it as a form of a date, he cannot not call it a misunderstanding.

"……what's wrong?"

"No……..nothing"

After Shidou replied like that, he swung his head to regain composure.

That's right. He has no leisure to weaken his mind from that. Right now, what Shidou should do, is to investigate all of the remaining suspects as fast as possible and find Natsumi. He pulled his cheeks lightly and headed towards the front of the station.

……but, Shidou scratched his cheeks.

The relationship between Shidou and Ai. The strife caused by Natsumi when she was disguised as Shidou a few days ago. An invitation letter sent using Shidou's name at this timing…… and also the nature of a female.

The answer derived from all these factors. That was-------

"……like I expected"

After 30 minutes. In the coffee shop in front of the station.

Sweat was flowing down on Shidou's cheeks from the predicted scenery being expanded in front of him.

"What is with that like I expected—"

"Got a problem---"

"What is it you bastard---"

In the opposite side of Shidou's seat, starting from the right in order, Ai, Mai, Mii, these 3 were sitting there……to think, it was just as he predicted.

Half-way when he was heading here, he somehow felt a bad premonition. Inside that situation, if she was invited by Shidou with those contents, it would be obvious the girl would be wary of him. There is no way she would purposely come to the meeting spot honestly. At least he was lucky not to be stood up though.

"……..fumu, 3 of suspects gathered. We have no choice. The difficulty is a little high but, let's investigate all of them"

"……understood"

After saying that with a soft voice, Shidou looked back at the female trio.

Tentatively, since they requested their preferred cakes from Shidou's treat, he felt their attitude was several times softer but, it didn't change the fact that they were in a bad mood. Shidou swam in his thoughts to think of something to say.

When he did that, the female trio let out their irritated voice, faster before Shidou could bring something up.

"……so, what do you want? Calling me with this letter"

"Is this that? A love letter? What, Itsuka-kun, are you aiming for Ai?"

"Now that you mention it, Ho-ra, the matter from before, you flipped me and Mai's skirt but, Ai was the only one having her ears blown at"

"N-no, that's not what I……."

He felt the conversation is starting to roll into a weird direction. Shidou hurried and denied but, the female trio weren't really listening.

"Eh, seriously? Itsuka-kun, towards me? E-eeeeh----……..no, well that's, I am thankful but, I, you know……."

"That's right. Ai has a person her heart decided on called Kashiwada-kun! So Itsuka-kun has no chance to enter!"

"Yeah Yeah! Right now Ai is in an admirable one-sided love to the, super herbivore, cultural, glass guy, he would refuse naturally even if we invite him, that Kashiwada-kun!"

"Wait, both of you! Why are you blabbering so normally!?"

Ai shouted while her face was red……well, it's not like Shidou was planning to tell someone else when he heard that.

"A-anyway! I don't know what you are planning but, although you have Tohka-chan, I won't forgive you sending such a letter to another girl!"

"That's right! What, are you saying you are not satisfied even though you are being liked by a super beauty like Tohka-chan!? Are you aiming for a polygamy!?"

"Ah, now that I think about it, Itsuka-kun laid his fingers on Tobiichi-san. Eh, don't tell me he has sumptuous feasts every night ? Uwaah! How impure!"

After 3 of them [Kya!] drew back chairs, they continued talking secretly while ignoring Shidou.

"Now that I think about it, the transfer student Tokisaki-san was it? Itsuka-kun also laid his fingers on her too"

"Ah--, that happened! He really is indiscriminate--"

"And there is that, Ho-ra, last time during that one time, did that mysterious Loli child came over to send Itsuka-kun his bento? "

"Uwah, that happened. As expected, there is no mistake he is someone coming out as a lolicon, mothercon, and siscon"

"Eh? A mothercon, siscon, on top of being a lolicon?"

"Un Un, I heard this before. Incidentally Ho-ra, isn't that time Itsuka-kun too? The guy that made a high school girl put on a collar and brought her walking around the park with dog ears and tails, swimsuit"

"Seriously? From what I heard, it is a case where he removed a girl's skirt"

"Kyaa! I can't believe this! Why is Tohka-chan okay with a guy like this!"

"Ah, yeah yeah, I asked a girl next door-------"

"……O,O----i……."

Even though Shidou raised his voice, the trio's conversation doesn't look like it will end any time soon.

Part 4

"…….I'm tired……."

At night. Having all his dates done, Shidou was lying down on the sofa in his living room while releasing a low tone voice.

Ai, Mai, Mii's long-talk continued endlessly after then, and it was completely dark when he was released. Tentatively, although he managed to do some investigation in the intervals but, by that time, Shidou's mental state and body was very exhausted.

After returning home, he ate (Shidou was about to cry in happiness from Kotori's feelings, and the fact food was already prepared when he got home, although Supermarket side-dishes was the main though) the food prepared by Kotori, even though he was slowly submerged inside the bath, the exhaustion from his body did not leave his body.

"Seriously, how miserable…….I won't be saying that. For today that is"

And, when he thought Kotori walked over slowly from the kitchen, a chilly object suddenly touched Shidou's cheeks.

He was shocked for an instant but, he immediately found out it was a cold carbonated can drink chilled inside the refrigerator.

"Ou, thanks"

When Shidou said that, Kotori [Yes] replied that and sat on the sofa. She then opened the juice can she was holding in her other hand and gulped down.

After Shidou raised his body, he imitated her and opened his mouth, before pouring in the carbonated drink into his throat. The feeling of the cold stimulating fluid spread out and expanded in his body.

"So, how was it, yesterday and Today's investigation"

After saying that, Kotori send her sights to him. Shidou slightly lowered his head forward.

"……..hnn, that's right. There are some fellows that I doubt If I wanted to but……..anyway, I can't say anything unless I check out everyone"

"Fuun……I see"

When Shidou said that, Kotori replied back easily like it was in her expectations.

It seems Kotori has checked every one of Shidou and the suspect's conversation. Maybe, Kotori might have felt the odd feeling like what Shidou has felt too.

"Tomorrow tentatively, every one of the suspects shown on the photos will be investigated. Sleep as fast as possible and take as much fatigue off you"

"Aah, that's right. I'll do that. but-------"

While saying that, Shidou brought his eyes towards the clock hanged on the wall.

"Even if I dive in my bed……..it looks like I won't sleep any time soon"

"…….I thought so"

Kotori shrug her shoulders as if she sympathized with Shidou's words.

The reason was very simple.

The clock hanged in the living room of the Itsuka house. The needles were, almost close in showing the time 12am.

Yes. Last night, it was the appearing time of the Angel <Haniel> that sucked in Yuzuru.

Originally, he planned to have a guard man placed at the house of everyone who was in the photos but, it was clear that it was meaningless since the opponent was an angel……..and more importantly, injuring Natsumi's mood can't be called a good plan when she has hostages in the current stage.

Most likely today too-------someone will disappear.

"……"

In silence, Shidou recalled back the video he saw in <Fraxinus> and also the warm feeling of Kaguya's tears on Shidou's lap. Powerlessness. While thinking he can't let Natsumi do as she

please anymore, the irritated feeling of being unable to stop <Haniel> from sucking in someone else was, running about inside his chest.

And----at that moment.

The instant the long needle and short needle pointed at 12am, the space in the center of the Itsuka house living room was * Guwann*distorted. And coming from there, the figure of the broom shaped Angel appeared.

"Wha……..!?"

Shidou raised his eyebrows and stiffened his body. That's because, the Angel is over here……!?

However, he immediately thought of the possibility. That's right. Right here there is Kotori---------one of the suspects was here.

"Kotori!"

After Shidou shouted, he threw the partially drunk carbonated drink away and stood in front of <Haniel> while spreading his arms to protect Kotori. As if to match up with that, the tip of <Haniel> slowly opened and exposed a mirror interior.

"! Shidou!? It's dangerous! Go away!"

But------no matter how long it took, <Haniel> did not suck Kotori in.

In exchange.

"----fufu"

Such a laugh could be heard coming from <Haniel>.

When he looked over since it was strange, he found out Natsumi's face was being shown on the glass part of <Haneil>.

"Natsumi…….!?"

"Hii. Long time no see, Shidou-kun"

After Natsumi swung her hand in a friendly manner, she raised the side of her lips.

"It is the end of the 2nd day of the game. Did you have fun?"

Inside the glass, Natsumi asked while tilting her head. Shidou gritted his teeth.

"…….what are you planning"

"What do you mean by what am I planning?"

"Yuzuru-----where did you hide her"

When Shidou asked, Natsumi *fufu* smiled and shrug her shoulders.

"That is a se.cr.et. I will give her back properly if you guess who I am. But, if you can't guess who I am by the end then------at that time, her [Existence] is mine"

"[Existence]…….?"

When he asked while making a frown with his eyebrows, Natsumi agreed calmly.

"Yes. If I gain victory in this game, the disappeared victims will not come back. Instead, I will use their face, voice, figure, to play around at that side of the world"

"……..!"

Shidou gasped from Natsumi's words.

In the world with the original isn't around, a fake exceedingly closer to the real would be striding around.

The thing is, Natsumi is able to completely replace Yuzuru and the people that will be disappearing from now on.

"……..Don't screw with me. I won't let that happen……!"

When Shidou said that with sharp sights, Natsumi *kara**kara* laughed in amusement.

"Then the method is simple. Try and guess who I am.----well, who do you think I am? The answer time would be…….let's see, I guess 1 minute is enough then"

Shidou and Kotori immediately looked at each other from Natsumi's words.

"Answer……!? Right now!?"

"Seems like the case……."

Kotori glared at Natsumi with detest while saying that. When she did that, Natsumi shrugged her shoulder while smiling.

"Fufu, that's because, Shidou-kun was getting impatient. In the end, he didn't pinpoint anyone at all during the first day. That's why, I thought of…….giving him some navigation"

"……fuun, you sure said it"

After saying that, *Fuun* Kotori exhaled. But immediately, send her sights towards Shidou realizing that now wasn't the time to be doing that.

"So how is it, Shidou. Just now, didn't you say there was someone you thought of doubting when you felt like doing so"

"Aah……..well that's right but, I am still not sure------"

"Someone will still disappear and it will be the end for today if you keep quiet right. We will lose nothing even if we try so go ahead and say it"

Kotori urged him by saying that. Shidou immerse himself in thoughts for an instant before slightly lowering his head forward.

"……..You're right"

And then, he looked back at <Haniel>'s glass showing Natsumi and opened his mouth.

"-----Natsumi. The one you were disguised as was……..Yoshino "

"Yoshino?"

The one who replied back was Kotori. Shidou was sending his sight towards Natsumi while continuing as if he was supplementing.

"…….aah, Yoshino is the one with the oddest feeling to her, if were to say within the limits of Yesterday and Today's investigation"

"I'll ask just in case, the reason is?"

"……inside the people I investigated, her actions was the most out of place"

And of course, it was a definite proof. She only had the oddest feeling compared to others, that's all. He felt sorry to treat her as a criminal for something like this. But, it was also fact, that there were no other suspicious suspects at his current point.

"Fuun……."

After Natsumi heard Shidou's answer, she only said that and clicked her finger.

When she did that, <Haniel>'s tip closed and returned back into a broom before, disappearing into the empty space.

"…….disappeared!? What does this mean? Is Shidou's answer correct? Is it out……..?"

Kotori raised her eyebrows in doubt while saying that.

However, there was no one who could answer that.

---And, on that night. 2 girls unexpectedly disappeared from their household beds.

Part 5

Next day, 14th October.

Opposite to the nice weather, Shidou's mood was bad.

But that was only normal. Last night, 2 girls were erased by < Haniel>, such a message was sent from <Ratatoksr>.

---Yoshino and Yamabuki. These 2.

"Yoshino……Yamabuki……, because of me they-------"

"……that's wrong"

After Shidou made a groan as if he was saying that to himself, he could hear Reine's voice coming from the Incam in his right ear.

"…….you did great in that limited amount of information. It was by any means not your fault"

"But……..didn't Yoshino…….disappear because……..I named her?"

Yes. Coming from <Ratatoksr>, when they were informed 2 more suspects disappeared compared to the night before last night , the explanation that reached Shidou and Kotori was that.

Which means, the number of people will increase each night, and whenever Shidou makes a mistake in designating the criminal then would another person will disappear? like that.

"……that possibility is high. But, Shin. That's-------"

"……it is okay. I understand. That and this is different. Even if I am hesitant, it's not like Natsumi will reveal herself. Also ……if I keep on making a dejected face, I'll feel bad for the busy idol who has opened her time for me"

After saying that and pulling his cheeks, he made a smile.

Yes. The partner for the first date of today was the popular idol, Izayoi Miku.

"…….hn, that's true…….sorry, Shin"

"? Why is Reine-san apologizing?"

"……..that's because although I understand about your strength and growth, I once again was about to make some unneeded ideas for you"

After saying that, Reine mocked for herself and made a small smile.

He was somewhat embarrassed from Reine's rare response; Shidou then scratched his cheeks and looked around his surroundings.

"No-now that I think about it……there are a lot of customers with weird appearance, here"

The place Shidou was waiting for Miku at was the at the central plaza of the amusement park---Ocean park amusement area where he had his date with Kotori last time but, for some reason today, customers with unique odd costumes were noticeable. It wasn't like this last time though.

What's more, it was not just a simple type of unique. Everyone was wearing clothes from anime or games from what he can see. Yes……..commonly known as the costume play.

"……aah, that's because------"

"Daaaaaarliiiiiiiiing!"

And, interrupting Reine's words, he heard a familiar voice coming from the entrance of the amusement area.-------it was Miku .

After Shidou looked over that side, he slightly raised his hand and was about to call her------

"Ou……Wait, eh?"

He made a blank face, after looking at the girl running towards him.

That's because, A girl that is thought to be Miku was……..wearing a frilly costume with white and purple as its basic tone.

The reason why he can't pinpoint her was simple. That's because she was wearing a mask covering her eye area on her face. It was a face as if she was about to head to a masquerade ball now.

"Miku…..right? What is with that appearance"

When Shidou asked her, Miku made a triumph *fufun* exhale and *baa*! Made a cute pose to show him.

"How is it? It fits me right. It's the 4th war maiden of [Valkyrie Misty], Tsukishima Kanon-chan. And this is the rare mask version when she appeared saving Misty and the group in chapter 6!"

"……eh? No, eh?"

When Shidou brought his eyebrows in suspicion, Miku [Mouu!] puffed up her cheeks.

"You don't know, [Valkyrie Misty]? It is an anime targeted towards girls on Sunday morning"

Shidou [ah] rock his eyebrows, from Miku's words.

"Now that I think about it, I feel that Yoshino watched that before……."

"Eh, Yoshino-chan likes [Misty] too? Ufufu, I heard something good---. I'll invite her to my house next time---!"

Saying that happily, Miku *nico**nico* smiled.

Shidou scratched the back of his head while pointing at Miku's appearance.

"So……..why is Miku's appearance like that Kanon-chan?"

"Eh? Didn't you hear from Reine-san? In the amusement area of ocean park, there is a Halloween event this week so cosplay is allowed inside the park---"

"Eh……..uh, is that so?"

Shidou opened his eyes wide in surprise but…….now that she said it, he agreed. No wonder there were only cosplayers walking around from just now.

"I see, that seems to be the case. But even so, I didn't know Miku loves cosplay"

"Well, there is that but, you know, I am a celebrity"

"Ah…….I see"

Being told that, Shidou was convinced. Not only there were people wearing masks, there were also robot costumes. It's true that if this was the place, then even if Miku covers her face like she is doing now, it probably won't feel weird.

"Well, I don't mind being exposed but, it seems darling is worried about that so--…….also, I don't want to be disturbed on our date"

"Haha……..no, well, unn, thanks for your consideration"

And thus. When Shidou made a wry smile, Miku *pon* hit her hand as if she recalled something.

"Oh yeah! I prepared a male costume for darling in the locker room. It's the mask and mantle of Jack-sama, the mysterious hero who saves Misty and the heroines! Alright, I will go and take it so please change into it---!"

"Eh? N-no thanks, I am okay"

"……then, the spare 2nd battle maiden Narusaki Mei-chan I brought……."

"I think Jack is super cool! I would be glad to wear it!"

He can't stand it if he were to wear something that frilly. When Shidou raised a shriek, Miku made a satisfied face as if she was very happy.

"Kyaaah!!"

When he came out from the locker room after changing, Miku wriggled her body while raising an ecstatic voice.

"Amazing! It looks great on you! You are so cool darling!"

"Re-really…….?"

Shidou said that while sweat was flowing down his head.

That's because, right now, Shidou's appearance was a mantle covering his whole body, and a mask covering his face, there was also a long hair wig on his head. The only gap touching open air was his ear.

"…….this, if not for my different extreme figure, wouldn't the appearance look like everyone else?"

"No! That is not true! The oozing aura coming out is different!"

"Aura…..huh"

"Yes! Actually, Jack-sama has that kind of appearance but, his real identity was the 6th war maiden, Kanou Emily-chan"

"Oi wait for a second, I didn't hear that"

"Ahaha, was that so?"

Miku tilted her head adorably while *pero* bringing her tongue out……..somehow after looking at that, he stopped feeling angry. Well, it is better than being forced to wear a skirt.

More importantly, the date can finally begin. Shidou muttered [Okay] with his face covered with a mask.

"Alright then, Miku. It's sort of weird to keep remaining in front of the locker room so, let's move.-------since it is a date, so let' s talk a lot"

"Yes! I'll be glad to"

After Miku said that happily, *Hashi* she entangled her arm with Shidou's. And just like that, with their bodies touching, they started walking.

…….wearing a costume and mask might be a good thing. His cheeks were probably blushing red, so Shidou somewhat thought about that while starting his questions at her.

"Hey, Miku.-------do you remember how we first met? You know, when Miku was singing in the Tenguu arena alone……..."

"Yes--. Of course"

Miku smiled and nodded. Shidou narrowed his eyes inside the mask and continued his words.

"During the first time we met, Miku was already like this. I was surprised when you suddenly hugged me"

"Eh?"

Miku opened her eyes wide from Shidou's words.

"Did something like that happen? During that time, I think I was in a period where I hate males to the extend I can't stand it though……"

"……she didn't get tricked huh"

"? Did you say something, darling"

"No, nothing at all. That's right; it looks like my memories are different"

After Shidou said that, he faced his sight towards Miku to ask the next question.

But, at that moment.

"Err…….sorry"

In front of Shidou and Miku, 2 girls with the same appearances as Miku appeared and timidly called out to them.

"That is Kanon-chan and Jack-sama right? If it is okay with you two, can I take a photo?"

"E-errr……."

Shidou scratched his head in troubled. Shidou was still okay but , Miku is an idol. Even though she was wearing a mask, isn't it better to avoid----------

"Yes, we don't mind. In exchange, please take it cool okay"

But, in contrary to Shidou's plan, Miku easily gave her the permission in a calm manner.

"Ah, thank you very much! Then immediately……."

After saying that, the girl made a stance with the camera. Shidou whispered to Miku.

"Oi, is this okay? Something like a photo."

"It is alright. My face is covered. More importantly, darling do a pose"

Miku said that in a good mood and gave Shidou fine instructions. Shidou put his hands around Miku's waist and like a finishing pose in a pair performances in figure skate; they took on an extremely unstable pose.

"Wai-wait, I somehow feel this is unstable……..."

"It is okay. Okay, please take the photo"

After Miku said that with a smile, the girl pushes the camera's shutter a few times continuously.

"Ah, Is the angle from here okay too!?

"Okay, go ahead"

Miku responded to the girls demand and bend her body.

When she did that, a sudden burden was placed on Shidou's arm, and the originally bad balance collapsed in one go.

"Uwah…….!?"

"Kyaa!"

And just like that, he fell on the spot as if he pushed Miku down .

"So-sorry! Are you okay!?"

"Uuun…….oh darling, you're so good da.ri.ng♥"

It seems she wasn't hurt. Miku's cheeks was blushing while * tsun* poking at the nose park on Shidou's mask.

"…….Looks like you are okay."

After Shidou said that with half his eyes opened, he stood up straight and pulled Miku up.

And----he noticed something odd there.

The girl taking photos just now was blankly opening her eyes and mouth wide, and was standing stunned there.

“Mi-Miku-tan……?”

“You’re joking, the real one?”

“……!?”

Hearing the girls word, Shidou immediately looked at Miku.-----that’s right. Why was Shidou able to see Miku’s cheeks blushing from just now.

The reason was simple. The instant they fell, the mask Miku was wearing came off.

“Oh my---?”

When Miku said that in a nonchalant way, the girls were surprised but, it seems to have spread to the other cosplayers in the surroundings.

“Eh? Miku? That Miku?”

“There is an Izayoi Miku cosplay? Eh? Not that? The real one?

“Uwah…….seriously? I am a big fan……”

"Rather the person with her, who is that. A guy? A girl……?"

Suddenly the surroundings started making a commotion.

"Guh……..let's go Miku!"

After Shidou made a grimace face inside his mask, he took Miku who was still leisurely opening her eyes wide, and ran away from the spot.

But, Miku put strength into her hands as if to resist.

"Wha-what's wrong Miku. If this keeps on, more people are going to gather"

"Hnn……..looks like I sprained my leg……."

"Eh? There was nothing wrong just now……..."

Miku pushed her index finger on the mouth part of the mask wearing Shidou, when Shidou was about to say that.

"That. is. why……..carry me"

"Ha……haaa!?"

Shidou opened his eyes wide inside his mask from Miku's sudden request.

"Yo-you, what are you……."

"Goo onn…….if you don't hurry, more people is going to gather and we can't get away you know?"



"Guh……!"

After Shidou gritted his teeth, he carried Miku by the shoulders and legs and put strength into his whole body. Commonly referred as, the princess carry.

And just like that, he ran away from the spot.

"Kyaa! Darling so cool!"

Miku shouted happily, and wrapped her hands around Shidou.

"That's why stop calling me darling in a place where everyone can hear……!"

Shidou raised a scream while running pass the amusement park filled with cosplayers.

Part 6

In the end, in order to slip through the cosplayers while carrying Miku, it took him quite some time and stamina.

That's because, although it was the weekdays, customers wanting to display their transformation was everywhere in the amusement area. A crowd was made at Shidou and Miku surrounding when they were heading to their destination.

He somehow manages to run into the toilet and succeeded in running away from a predicament by making Miku wear Shidou's

costume but-------by that time, a huge amount of stress accumulated on Shidou's body.

But, Shidou does not have the free time to rest leisurely.

The date with Miku ended and the time was 5pm. Shidou purposely changed to his school uniform and head towards the school with the classes already ended.

It is to meet the next target--------Tama-chan-sensei.

"……I have already informed teacher Okamine beforehand. She is waiting for you in the counseling room."

"Understood. I will head there immediately"

After replying back shortly, he walked into the school building with few students left in it.

And, halfway there, a sudden small uneasiness passed by his mind. Directed towards the Incam, he asked her in fear.

"…….now that I think about it, what kind of reason did you use to call Sensei out?"

Yes. Similarly to Ai, Mai and Mii, Tama-chan-sensei was another person Shidou has not invited to a date before. He was curious on what kind of literature was used to invite her.

"…….Aah, I told her regarding [He has something to discuss about his career]"

"I see. That would be natural"

After Shidou made a relieved sigh, he headed to the designated spot.

Not long later, he reached in front of the counseling room.

*Kon**Kon* Shidou knocked on the door and [Go ahead] Tama-chan-sensei's cute voice could immediately be heard coming from inside the room.

"Sorry for my rudeness"

He said that after saying that and entered the room. When he did that, he confirmed Tama-chan-sensei there spreading out the submitted task printouts on the table while sitting on the sofa. It would seem she was grading while waiting for Shidou.

"Ah, Itsuka-kun. Long time no see"

Tama-chan-sensei said that with a smile while bundling the printout, and pushed it to the book which is thought to be related to careers placed at the side of the table.

Long time no see, Shidou felt a somewhat odd feeling from that word but…….there was nothing wrong with it, that's because Shidou has been skipping school to look for Natsumi from today and yesterday.

"Well, please sit down for now"

"Thank you"

Being urged by Tama-chan-sensei, he sat at the opposite side of the sofa. When he did that, Tama-chan-sensei lifted the bridge of her glasses with a meek expression.

"Eeer, I heard from Murasame-sensei that there is something you want to consult with me regarding your career……"

"Yes, is it okay if I ask for a bit?"

When Shidou said that, Tama-chan-sensei [Uuun…….] made a little difficult face.

"I don't mind that but…….why is it me instead of the counselor?"

"Eh? Ah, Errrr……..."

Shidou unintentionally hesitated. That was true now that he was told that. There is a specialized teacher for the counseling here . If there was something he wanted to ask, it would be normal to consult that person.

However, if he were to make an honest reaction here, she would baton touch the counselor. Shidou clenched his fist while raising his voice.

"No, how should I say it…….it has to be Okamine-sensei!"

"Eh…….!?"

When Shidou said that, Tama-chan-sensei's face was for some reason filled with surprise. For an image, her face was as if her heart got *Dokyyuuun!* pierced through.

"It is a *career*…….consultation, which has no meaning…… …….if it is not me?"

"Yes. There is no meaning if it is not Sensei"

When Shidou nodded firmly, sweat started flowing down suddenly on Tama-chan-sensei's face.

"E,eeh……..? Do-does that mean, wed----------"

"Eh?"

"N-no! nothing at all!"

Tama-chan swung her head in panic. Unable to understand any of her actions, Shidou tilted his head.

Anyhow, since he managed to get alone with her. It might be better to check if this is the real Tama-chan-sensei or not quickly. Shidou swam around his thoughts to make that decision and------- for now, he decided to ask about when sensei became his homeroom teacher.

"Err, Sensei. I want to confirm something…….do you remember about April?"

"April……wait, ah!"

After Tama-chan-sensei recalled something and opened her eyes wide, she then nodded violently which made him think her neck was about to come out.

"I remember! I clearly remember! Itsuka-kun, perhaps…….. have you finally made up your mind!?"

"Huh……?"

When Shidou went blank from the unexpected reaction, Tama-chan-sensei took several books from her bag placed on the sofa and spread it on top of the table facing towards Shidou.

"I prepared a lot of book related to careers. Please tell me if there is one from these you wish to go with!"

"No, Sensei, I……"

And, when he tried to return back to the question, Shidou realized something weird. It was the [Career related] books Tama-chan-sensei spread out.

The first book. It was a book with a beautiful bride on the cover. Is it related to a bridal work?

The second book. It had a man and woman thought of as a husband and wife with a cute baby decorated on its cover. This was…….. a guide to childcare division school…….. probably. Maybe.

And the third book……..rather, that wasn't a book but rather something that looks like documents. On the top the word [

Marriage registration] shined, her name was already written on the bride side and it was already stamped.

"W-wha……..!?"

After looking until there, Shidou finally noticed Tama-chan sensei's outrageous misunderstanding.

Now that he think back, because of the instructions gave by < Ratatoskr>, Shidou confessed (More like, propose) to Tama-chan-sensei once on April.

"E-err, Sensei…….?"

"Itsuka-kun……..I' am very happy! I, kept believing you know. That Itsuka-kun might have pulled your knees back from the sudden turns of event last time, and would definitely come back after calming down! Aaah……., it was worth preparing a lot of stuff! Hey Itsuka-kun, when should I give my greetings to your parents? Ah, before that, should we write it down first? Eh? A seal? It is okay you know. I also prepared that properly. Please rest assured. I will make sure to submit this to the government office when Itsuka-kun properly turns 18 years old!"

Her eyes were shining while Tama-chan-sensei was gripping on to Shidou's blazer. Shidou [Hii] gasped and immediately stood up.

"So-sorry for the misunderstandingsssssssssssssssss!"

He shouted and exited the classroom.

Right now still in the counseling room, Tama-chan-sensei was still blabbering about her future family plan in a fascinated state.

Part 7

7pm. Shidou was walking in the night street for the date with his next target.

The 12th suspect. With this, this would mean the end of the investigation of everyone taken in the photos.

"……."

Shidou was silently walking while placing his hands on his chin , and swimming in his thoughts.

Right now the remaining suspects were, Tohka, Yoshino[8D 1], Tonomachi, Kotori, Kaguya, Mii, Tama-chan sensei, and also the last suspect, a total of 9 people.

The dates today were from, Miku, Tama-chan-sensei. Miku remembers the time when they first met and although he did not talk much with Tama-chan-sensei, she remembered about the confession Shidou made on April. In both sides, he doesn't think they are disguised from Natsumi.

Which means, the last person he is going to meet is going to be Natsumi……..would that be the case.

Or---------maybe Natsumi, has the ability to trace back into a persons' memory.

If that is the case, he would have to start the investigation again. On top of having to find another method to find Natsumi, today once more, someone will be erased from <Haniel>.

But……somehow.

3 days after the investigation started. There was a small odd feeling constantly smoking in Shidou's head.

A game to guess the criminal with no clues. One person for one day will disappear and if he makes a mistake in pointing at the criminal, then the target will also disappear. Before all the suspects disappear, Shidou has to find Natsumi out from them.

Is that recognition, really correct……?

There is something entangled in his mind. But he does not know what that something is. Shidou scratched his head violently from the nasty feeling.

"…….Shin, you are almost at the target spot"

"……., ah……"

Being told that by Reine, Shidou immediately raised his face. He noticed he walked quite some distance while he was thinking about something. It's quite amazing that he did not collide into anything.

And, when Shidou made a deep sigh with self-admonition put into it, in front-------coming from the direction of the target spot Shidou was heading to, he could hear a familiar voice.

"----------Shidou"

"Aah, Origami"

Shidou slightly hanged his hands and replied back. Towards the last suspect--------Origami Tobiichi.

"Sorry, did you wait?"

Origami slightly swung her head when Shidou said that.

"I just arrived"

"……..we were observing her just in case but, it looks like she was waiting one hour before time"

But, Reine said that as if she caught that. Shidou made a powerless wry smile.

"? What's wrong?"

"No-no……well you know, I just thought it was a while since I went out with Origami"

"I see"

After Origami said that and nodded, she continued without moving an inch of her expression.

"I am also happy"

"O-ou……."

There was nothing strange from what he could see but, during the long time he was with Origami, Shidou could somewhat understand there is a slight change in her emotions. Towards his impure actions of dating her for the sake of investigation, he felt a slight pain in his chest.

"So, what are we watching?"

After saying that, Origami looked up at the building she was waiting at until now. Over there, there were several giant movie signboards decorated on it.

Yes. The dating spot with Origami was a movie theatre.

"Hnn, that's right……I haven't decided……."

"Haven't decided?"

When Shidou said that, Origami twitched her eyebrows.

Oh no, he gasped. Shidou was the one that called her out, so it would be unnatural to not decide on what to watch--------maybe, it might be too indecisive.

"No, sorry, it's not that…….ah, right, let's choose this! It often appears in the CM……..."

When Shidou was in panic, Origami quietly continued.

"That means you did not invite me because there was a movie to watch, but rather you invited me because you just wanted to go out with me?"

"Eh? A-aah. Yes……..that would be the case"

"……"

When Shidou was being vague, Origami *pyon* hopped up expressionlessly.

She then turned her body around, and walked quickly into the movie theatre.

"Ah, oi, Origami?"

"Come"

After Origami brought Shidou to the ticket counter, she stood in front of the empty window and erected 2 fingers up towards the staff.

"---------the [Black fantasia] on 7:30pm. 2 tickets for *couples*"

"Heh?"

The female staff opened her eyes wide from Origami's unhesitant words.

"E-errr, is 2 tickets okay……?"

"I don't mind"

"Ye-Yes, alright, the total bill is 3600 yen please"

After Origami took the tickets, she took one piece and handed it to Shidou.

"Here"

"A-aah……..thank you. Ah, I was the one that called you out so, I'll pay"

However, Origami stopped his hands when Shidou was about to bring out his wallet.

"It's okay, later"

"Eh?"

When Shidou opened his eyes wide, Origami walked towards the counter to buy some snacks and drinks like that.

Not knowing a single speck of Origami's intentions, when he was standing still in a half-blank state, he could hear Reine's voice coming from his right ear.

"……..I see, so she is planning to not let you go back immediately after the movie finishes"

"……..."

Shidou felt his back oddly cold from those words.

"He-hey, Origami. Do you remember the events on June?"

Just before the movie started. Around the time when the new movie previews was on the screen, Shidou started talking to Origami sitting beside him to investigate her.

"Events on June?"

"Aah, you know, didn't we have a date once at that time."

"Of course, I remember"

"Really? So what actually happened"

Origami nodded when Shidou said that.

"Time: 1100 meet up in front of the fountain at the Tenguu station plaza. Time: 1110 went to eat lunch at the restaurant. Time: 1115 Shidou went to toilet. Time: 1200 headed towards the movie theatre. Time: 1210 Shidou went to toilet again. Thought Shidou's was having stomach problems, time: 1420, purchased medicine in pharmacy. Time: 1500----------"

"Wai-wait a second"

He stopped Origami from continuously lining up the events fluently, for a moment.

"……..how can you remember so clearly……..?"

When Shidou asked with sweat flowing down his cheeks, Origami nodded before searching into the bag she brought. She then took one book out from inside.

"That's?"

"Diary"

When Origami replied that shortly, she handed the book to Shidou.------What's more, with the page opened after reading it. When he looked at the words, he found out it was certainly by the minutes and the events were written in very fine details.

"Am-amazing"

He made a wry smile while flipping through the diary. Especially, the day when Shidou confessed to Origami and the day Shidou first went to Origami's house, the diary had around 5 times more sentences than normal.

"……..uh"

Shidou looked at the entry on that day, and let sweat ride on his cheeks. It was about that time when she checked her room after Shidou disappeared, and the rabbit puppet she picked up a few days ago went missing …….it should be about [Yoshinon]. There was also an illustration there. There is no mistake.

Although it was for Yoshino, the experience of stealing was hurting his chest……..but, he felt a little at ease from the description [The anniversary Shidou took one of my personal belongings] that was written after that.

"……since she has something like that, would she be real , this Origami"

"…….we still don't know. The real Tobiichi Origami might have a diary but, it doesn't mean she is definitely the real one just because she was holding on to it now"

"Well……that's true"

Shidou closed the diary and gave it back to Origami.

When he was doing this, the screen suddenly turned dark and a solid song started flowing out. It would seem the original movie has started.

Shidou then felt something soft on the back of his right hand. Origami was placing her hand on top of Shidou's hand.

"Haha……..."

He made a wry smile but, he won't do something like brushing it away. Instead, something like grabbing hands in the middle of the movie, Shidou thought it was quite cute for Origami even charming.

But, Shidou's thoughts were naïve.

"……..."

Accompanying with the movie progressing, Origami's hands gradually crawled bit by bit.

Her hand was originally placed on top but, now it was patting on the back of Shidou's hands. As if to be affectionate with Shidou's hands, she traced upwards with her fingers one after another and once she reached the gap of his fingers, she made an excessively erotic move and entangled his fingers.

"Hii…….!?"

Even though the place he was touched at was after his right hand wrist, Shidou felt a shock as if electricity flowed through his whole body. The mixed feeling of ticklish and unpleasantness pressed forwards like a wave and made Shidou eyes flash on and off.

"Shidou……."

He then heard a whisper on his ear. Shidou's eyes were swirling round and round.

"Wha-whawhawhawha?"

"Shidou I want you to touch me too"

"To-touch you……"

When Shidou said that with a shaking voice, Origami pulled down her collar with her right hand and show him.

“I am not wearing anything today”

“……!?”

Shidou gasped. His brain started to spin around as if it has gotten a shot, and his face was hot until he was hallucinating that smoke might come out of his ears.

Shidou took a deep breath to calm himself down before, lifting up the ice tea he bought, just now after feeling around for it and putting the straw into his mouth to moisten his dry throat.

However, no matter how long it took, the taste of the tea would not spread in his mouth.

Thinking it was strange, after he peeked at his hands, he immediately found out the reason. Shidou was not putting the straw pierced into the cup of ice tea into his mouth.

Then, where is this straw in Shidou’s mouth right now…….

After Shidou shifted his sights, he found out Origami was putting the end of the straw in her mouth while bending her body forward.



Origami silently *churu* sucked onto the straw.

"Uwah!?"

Shidou raised a loud voice and stood up from his chair. And the sharp sights coming from the surrounding customers were piercing through his whole body.

"? What's wrong?"

"No, what do you mean what's wrong……..."

"……this is……."

"The real one……."

"There is no mistake……."

Coming from Shidou's right ear, it has been classified Origami was unanimously the real one by the crews of <Fraxinus>.

Part 8

---In the end, the time Origami released Shidou was when it reached 11pm.

He was walking in the night street exhausted and returned back until his house.

"Today……..was particularly tiring"

He made a stretch while talking to himself. There was a soft sound produced around his shoulder bones.

After the movie, he talked with her in a coffee shop nearby but ……a single instances indicates what happens all the time , Origami recorded every single thing about the time she spent with Shidou. She said it with accuracy like a playback from a video recording.

On top of that, it was with assertiveness. As expected, it looks like Origami wasn't Natsumi.

With this, he has dated all of the suspects but, right now, the clearly most suspicious one was------

"shidou!"

And when Shidou was thinking while opening the Itsuka house gate, Tohka in her pajamas called out to him from the entrance of the neighboring mansion.

"Tohka, why are you here so late"

"That is my line. Where did you go until this time?"

Tohka walked towards Shidou and said that. Rather than calling her angry, the feeling of her purely just wanting to ask a question was stronger.

"Ah--……sorry, a little something"

"Muu……."

After Shidou evaded that, Tohka puffed her cheeks because she was a little unsatisfied.

"These few days, Shidou looks so busy. You took day off from school and won't make bento and dinner at all……."

"So-sorry. I will make it again after everything is settled. Okay?"

When Shidou said that while joining his hands and lowering his head, Tohka swung her head in panic.

"No, you're mistaken. That's not what I meant, you know…… ……..Hnn? No, it was correct that I wanted to eat Shidou's dinner, so it is not wrong……?"

After Tohka wring her head as if she was thinking about something, *muumuu* she groaned. But she immediately swung her head to regain composure and grabbed Shidou's hands.

"Anyway! You have some matters to do right? Do not worry about me. I won't quarrel with Tobiichi Origami and I will do something about food. That's why, Shidou do what you should do."

"Tohka……"

When Shidou said her name, Tohka's cheeks blushed immediately.

"……but, having Shidou not around was, kind of, err……lonely. Tell me if there is something I can do. If it is for Shidou, I will come running to you no matter what!"

After saying that, Tohka gripped his hands tightly.

Those straightforward sights, those words, made him very happy and Shidou re-gripped his hands.

"…….Aah, thank you. Tohka. I have the strength of a thousand men if I have you with me."

After saying that, Tohka made a smile with her face in a very happy manner.

"Umu, that's what I want to say! Alright good night, shidou! Natsu-mi!"

For an instant, he twitched when Tohka said that with a smile but……..I immediately remembered back.

"Aah, good night, Tohka. Natsu-mi"

When Shidou swung his hand, Tohka swung her hands several times more in a spirited manner and ran back to the mansion. And while making a big yawn, she entered the mansion.

It would seem, she really stayed up until now just to tell that to Shidou. Tohka usually goes to sleep early though.

How should he put it, he felt it was apologetic together with amusement and loveliness filling him up, so Shidou leaked a small smile.

He felt his walking was a little lighter compared to a few minutes. Shidou opened the gate and took out his key from his pocket to open the front door.

Like that-------

"You're late"

In a timing as if she was waiting there, his miss-sister said that in a daunting pose.

"Don't say that. I had lots of problem in my side……"

"……I know that. I understand the situation and it's not like I am angry. But--------"

*Fuun*When Kotori exhaled, she frowns her eyebrows in hate while continuing her words.

"-----it's almost time"

And, the moment Kotori said that.

Gunyari When Shidou thought the space between Kotori distorted, a broom-like Angel appeared in its place.

"Kuh…….she's here"

"<Haniel>……!? The time is already 12am!?"

Shidou distorted his face and clenched his teeth. It would seem, it was beyond expectation that it took some time to get back.

Nonetheless, it was a blessing in misfortune <Haniel> did not appear during the time Tohka was him. He made a big sigh to calm his heart and looked at the broom-type angel.

As if to match up with that, the tip of <Haniel> opened and exposed the mirror interior to the outside.

And just like yesterday, Natsumi showed herself inside it.

"Hi.i.i. One day no see Shidou-kun. Were you lonely?"

"Natsumi……you……!"

"Iyaaan, what a scary face. Let's have more fun with the game shall we?"

After saying that, Natsumi made an enjoying smile. Shidou clenched his fist until his nails dug into his palm while making a thin sigh to calm his heart down.

Letting his emotions outburst right here won't fix anything. Rather than that, there might be a possibility Yuzuru, Yoshino and Ai who were erased by <Haniel> would be in danger. He can't say anything bad.

Natsumi *nya**nya* looked at Shidou in that manner while continuing her words.

“Fufu, the third day for the game has ended. Have you investigated everyone already? Well, give me an answer.------ Who am I”

“…….uh”

After Shidou gulped, he recalled back the faces of the suspects he dated in these 3 days.

But-------he could not answer immediately. Even though everyone’s investigation was done, Shidou has not grasped clear evidence yet.

“Shidou, there is no time”

“……I know”

He replied to Kotori’s voice and the suspects in his head disappeared one by one.

The remaining last one was--------Tama-chan-sensei.

It’s true that she acted like she remembers Shidou’s confession on April but, it’s not like it was clear and if he trace back at Tama-chan-sensei’s action in the past few days, he might at least get the answer on why she was impatient about marriage.

When he thought like that, he felt that over the top approach might also be a method to falter Shidou to prevent him from asking unneeded questions.

After Shidou glared at <Haniel> he quietly opened his mouth.

“Natsumi--------“

But…….at that moment, Yoshino’s face who has disappeared yesterday scratched his mind, and made him stop his words.

The girl that was erased by <Haniel>---------- because Shidou vaguely pinpointed her to Natsumi.

If this pinpoint is wrong then, Shidou will drag someone new into this.

In reality, Tama-chan-sensei was to the end only [Suspicious]. It ’s not like he has definite evidence. In addition, the moment he was about to say Tama-chan-sensei’s name, the very hazy odd feeling coiled up in his head bind on to Shidou’s thoughts harder.

---something. Was something in a fundamental way, causing him to misunderstand.

Shidou’s words stopped from his doubt which had no basis.

“-----Shidou!”

“……uh!”

He opened her eyes wide from Kotori's shout.

But----------it was too late. The moment Shidou regained himself , Natsumi used her hand and made a big *baa*.

"Buu---! Times up. Too bad. I will challenge you tomorrow~"

The space once again shook and <Haniel> disappeared.

And the Itsuka siblings were the only ones left standing still silently in the Itsuka house entrance.

After some time passed. Kotori scratched her head while sighing.

"……..I won't blame you. With a situation where the pinpointed person will disappear if you were wrong, there is no way you can give an answer without definite evidence to it"

But, Kotori continued.

"Several people have already disappeared, and also---------- this game will not end unless you find Natsumi, please remember this"

"……..aah……sorry"

What Kotori said made sense. Shidou clenched his teeth on his indecisiveness and powerlessness, and scratched his hair violently.

And thus, he heard Reine's voice coming from his right ear at that moment.

"……..Shin. Can you hear me, Shin"

"Reine-san…….? What's wrong?"

"……..just now, <Haniel> appeared on the automated camera observing the suspects"

Shidou felt his heart wrung out from Reine's words.

He should have known it. It was the same as yesterday. After Shidou's reply, <Haniel> will erase one of the suspects. That's, something he should have known already.

But, when he was told about the situation again, he felt his heartbeat violently until it hurts.

"…….today, who"

Was the one that disappeared? That word did not come out from his mouth. Although the results won't change from that, it was difficult to make those word's tone as if his body was rejecting it.

"…….aah. The one that disappeared today was------"

Reine hesitated for an instant----------that was how, she was in question whether to inform the information to Shidou or not----------after she cut her words, she continued.

"……Tohka"

“Eh……?”

From the words Reine made.

Shidou felt a cracking sound in his body.

Chapter 5: Witch's Work
Witchcraft

Part 1

The several existing buildings owned by <Ratatoskr> at the outskirts of Tenguu city.

Woodman visited one of them and was at the 3rd floor underground.

“-----This way. Sir Woodman”

The young organization member leading Woodman stopped his legs at the end of the long corridor.

Over there, there was a narrow residential space separated by iron bars. Basically, it was a jail.

There was one man inside. He was a middle-aged man wearing plain work clothes. There are several wounds thought to be left just recently on his face, and body.

“Around 2 months ago from now, it is the DEM member captured during the events in Arubi Island. We found out he is the second chief executive colonel James A Paddington from his ID but, we don’t know anything else other than that”

“Nothing? Does that mean he is silent?”

“Rather than calling it silent……..”

The organization member made a troubled face and *gan**gan* slammed on the iron bars. However, Paddington inside the jail was lying down on the bed and did not respond back at all.

"That's the case. We tried several times interrogating him using a Realizer but, it's like memories slipped out from his head"

"I see. It's a hand that guy would use"

"That guy?"

The organization member tilted his head. Woodman [No] replied back with that.

"Can I talk a little with him"

"Haa……..I don't mind, though……"

The organization member made a dubious face while stepping back. When Woodman ordered Karen, the wheelchair was faced towards Paddington inside the cage.

"-----Yaa, James. Will you talk with me a bit"

And. The moment he called out to him.

"…….!"

Being persistently unresponsive until now, Paddington jumped out from the bed as if he was a doll with a spring attached onto it.

"Uooo…….!?"

The organization member twitched his shoulders. But, Paddington did not bother about that and after he walked towards Woodman with unsteady steps, *gashan* such a sound was produced and he lay on the iron bars. After his eyes became unfocused, his lips covered with drool was forced towards Woodman and the group's presence.

“
A-a-aaaaaaaaaaAAAAAAAAaaaaa-WoooooOOOOOOD-Ma-Mama
”

Paddington made a code-like broken voice echoed from the depths of his throat and his head shook repeatedly after some intervals.

However, after a few seconds. The weird dissonant voice echoing out from Paddington’s throat was stabilized and could be heard as a voice.

And then.

“-----Yaa, Long time no see, Elliot.”

He made a voice different from usual.

No……calling the impression 'made a voice' correct could be strange. Paddington’s face did not change until now. Even though voices were coming out, his lips and tongue were not moving. It is already appropriate say, a different voice was echoing out from a human-type speaker.

"Wha-thi-this is……."

The organization member raised a voice filled with dismay. Well, that was only normal. Woodman made a small shrug with his shoulders before, at Paddington------no, more precisely, towards the guy at the other side of him.

"Aah……it's been 30 years. Are you doing well Ike?"

"Thanks to you. How about you, Elliot?"

"I have no confidence in my side. My eyes has completely gotten bad just recently."

"Oh well oh well."

After the unknown voice was released out from a zombie-state man, they had a small chat for a while. The organization member at the side was looking at him with disgusted eyes.

"By the way, Elliot. Why don't you come back to us. You should know this too but, we Inversed <Princess>. Our dearest realization is near. If you provide assistance that would probably make it even more certain. If you come back, Ellen would certainly be pleased."

"Sadly, I don't have such intentions, Ike. I told you that many times 30 years ago."

When Woodman said that, the [Voice] sighed regretfully.

"That was a letdown. Even when 30 years passed, it looks like the fever that harmed you has not completely healed."

The same time he said that, Paddington's body slowly slithered down the iron bars.

"--------then, I won't go easy on you the next time we meet. I will use the Spirits for my dearest realization."

"I won't let that happen. That's what <Ratatoskr> is for"

"Fu……"

And------at the same time, after Paddington prostrate on the ground, he spat out a large amount of blood from his mouth.

"Wha……!?"

The organization member loses his cool before operating the terminal, and starting to contact the upper floor.

While looking at the situation, Woodman slightly brought his eyebrows closer.

"You don't change at all, Ike.-------everything is just the way it is from 30 years back."

After that, he called out to the girl holding onto the wheelchair's handle without changing his face direction.

"Not far away, it might be possible there will be a direct battle with DEM……please be prepared, Karen."

"There is no problem. I understand my sister and I won't understand each other from years ago."

From Woodman's words.

Karen Nora Mathers, replied back without changing the tone of her voice.

At the same time. Inside a room in the building of the British HQ of DEM industries, the company managing director Isaac Wescott made a sigh.

And, after he operated the buttons near his hands, he called the person outside.

After some time passed, the room door was knocked.

"----Pardon my rudeness"

After saying that, Ellen entered the room.

"Is there something you need, Ike?"

"No……it's not a big deal though."

Westcott said that while directing his sights towards Ellen.

"I just thought Murdoch's opinion made sense, in the last board meeting"

"And, which is?"

"The fact that we lost large numbers of Wizards in the last battle . Especially, the loss of Adeptus 2 Takamiya Mana and Adeptus 3 Jessica Bailey will make a huge problem in targeting Spirits from now on"

"……are you saying, a replacement member?"

Ellen raised the side of her eyebrows while saying that. There is no mistake there is a glimpse of slight displeasure on her expression. Westcott made a small shrug with his shoulders.

"Naturally, everything would progress nicely if I have you. But, it is just a reserve to the end. It's reality that even you move easier that way right?"

"……."

Ellen made a sigh before looking back at Westcott again.

"-------But even so, who on earth? A wizard who holds the power worthy of a DEM Adeptus numbers. If it is SSS Artemisia, then regretfully she is--------"

"Nooo"

After Westcott stopped Ellen's words, he lifted the side of his lips.

"--------Well wasn't there one. An extraordinary Wizard that inflicted a wound on your body"

Part 2

---Outside the room, *Chichichi*he heard the sparrows chirping.

"……."

Shidou silently took a glance at the morning sun from his room window, before looking alternately at the data on the screen of his personal computer and the scary amount of documents scattered around nearby.

On it, particular details and response towards Shidou from the suspects were written down closely together. Several information investigated by <Ratatoskr> ignoring their privacy such as hometown, family structure, body type data like height, weight, blood-type, mole positions, the house addresses in their surroundings until detailed hobby preference, and fetishes, were messily written down. Naturally, data related to the spirits were only toothless data's.

That was not all. Shidou requested Reine and looked through the video recording on all suspects. Tentatively, <Ratatoskr> has checked all of it once before but, he couldn't be satisfied until he looked at it with his own eyes.

"……..It's…… already morning huh"

Shidou scratched his blurry eye while operating his personal computer to display the list of the remaining suspects.

---it has been quickly 2 days after Tohka disappeared.

During that time, Shidou made a mistake in pinpointing the criminal twice and a total of 4 suspects were lost.

The next day Tohka disappeared, Tama-chan-sensei pinpointed by Shidou disappeared together with Tonomachi.

And again on the next day. Just like Tama-chan-sensei, Shidou who reconsidered back his information from the start, pinpointed Hazakura Mai since he did not talk to her before according to his past information then-------Mai, and Mii disappeared.

Right now the only ones left were Kotori, Origami, Kaguya, and Miku, these four people.

But--------no matter how many times he investigated these 4 people, he could not find any traces of Natsumi.

"……"

However, Shidou was swimming in thoughts inside his hazy conscious.

---Something was pulling his mind.

The suspects completely have no suspicious points coming out. That fact sprouted a certain possibility inside Shidou's mind.

He was still not certain. Also, it's not like he clearly knows who Natsumi was disguised as. But, that possibility was a thought filled with powerful poison that might flip Shidou's actions until now upside down.

"…….Maybe, this is------"

Shidou placed his elbow on the table and brought his hands to his mouth. Maybe it was because of lack of sleep or excessive stress; just those movements caused him to feel a little nauseatic.

And, when Shidou was silently thinking for a while, the door suddenly opened from behind and Kotori entered the room.

"Shidou……wait a second. Don't tell me you didn't sleep ?"

Kotori raised her eyebrows and walked closer to Shidou.

"…….Ou, Kotori"

"I told you before, don't force yourself. I understand your feeling but, we will lose everything if you destroy your body condition"

"It's okay, something this much. Today……is a day for re-investigation. Errr-------first off was Kaguya right?"

After Shidou replied with half his eyes opened, he extended his hand to pick up the documents that fell on the floor just now.

But at that moment, he suddenly felt dizzy, and fell on his knees on the spot.

"Uh…….."

"Aaah Mouu, Like I said……!"

Kotori said that in irritation and took Shidou's hand.

"I told you so……..! Anyway, hurry up and rest! You can't even make a normal decision if you are at that state!"

"I don't have that-------free time……I finally, understood something. I have to find Natsumi faster or else"

"Enough of that. No matter, I was planning to cancel the investigation in the afternoon and evenings so, please sleep for a while now!"

"…….!"

Hearing that from Kotori, Shidou immediately swung her hands off.

"Cancel……..? What do you mean? Doesn't that mean we would lose clues unnecessarily. Why would you……..!"

"Calm down a bit"

Pisu Kotori chopped Shidou's head. It's not like she put in a lot of strength but, it was a tremendous strike to Shidou right now. He then fell face flat on the ground from the head rocking impact.

"Guh……"

"Just stay like that and look at this"

After saying that, Kotori showed a white card in her hand.

For an instant, he thought it was the message card sealed together with the photos from Natsumi but, it would seem the sentence writing was different. He blinked his eyes and read the sentence written on it.

[Let's end this game.

Tonight, catch me.

If not, everyone will disappear.

Natsumi]

"Wha……."

After Shidou gasped, he raised his body and snatched the card away from Kotori's hand.

"What is……..this"

"It was in the post, when I woke up in the morning. A challenge letter from Natsumi……that should be it"

Shidou gulped from Kotori's words.

"Tonight……..if I don't find Natsumi, the remaining suspects will disappear……that's it?"

"If we take it literally, that would be the case"

Kotori said that while shrugging her shoulders. Shidou clenched his teeth while placing his hands on his forehead.

He did what he can. He checked everything he could think of. But even so, Shidou has not selected a Natsumi-like person from the remaining 4 suspects.

But even so……..the time limit suddenly came forth. Telling him not to get impatient is impossible.

---Today, if Shidou made a mistake in his decision, all of the remaining suspects will disappear.

That extraordinary pressure, gripped Shidou's heart tightly.

But-------Shidou clenched his teeth.

"……Kotori. I have something I want to ask from you. Will you listen?"

"What? I will handle it properly if it is within my limits."

Kotori made a meek face and replied. Shidou summed up his thoughts while slowly saying his plan.

After a few seconds. After hearing that, Kotori *fuumu* groaned and placed her hands on her chin.

"I see. Alright. I will have that prepared"

"……..that's a life saver. Honestly, I still am lacking conclusive evidence."

"In exchange, you have to sleep properly until that time. That is my condition."

"…….Aah, I understand"

After Shidou nodded honestly, he stood up and made small yawns while lying his body down on his bed.

He then slowly raised his right hand and bends his fingers one by one before making a fist.

Even now, Shidou was still not positive who Natsumi was disguised as. If this is called a puzzle then, it would be in a state where the last few pieces were missing.

That is why-------regardless whether if Natsumi's challenge letter reached him or not, Shidou might request the same thing to Kotori.

"-----Natsumi"

He looked at empty space while mumbling.

"Tonight……..I will definitely-----find you"

Part 3

"Ufufu……fufufu……..."

Disguised as XXX, Natsumi made a smile in a good mood.

She remembered Shidou's face when she cause the disappearance of Yuzuru on day 1, Yoshino and Ai on day 2, Tohka on day 3, Tamae and Tonomachi on day 4, Mai and Mii on day 5.

An indescribable expression from the mixture of fear, uneasiness, dismay, and despair. Each time it was pictured in her mind, Natsumi would feel a pleasant ecstatic feeling run through her body.

However, that was no good.

---It was no longer enough for her.

Natsumi was craving. For a bigger fear than anything before. For Shidou's expression to be tormented with despair to its limits. That is why--------one more letter. She sent the last letter to Shidou.

In order to erase all of the remaining suspects.

In order to see Shidou's expression in that instant.

And after all of it ended--------in order to suck Shidou in too after he was on his knees from despair.

"I will not forgive……those who saw my secret. I won't let it end by erasing them. I will make them die from despair of losing all their comrades"

After Natsumi muttered that, she clenched her teeth.

"No one…….can find me anyway"



Part 4

At night on that day.

After taking enough sleep (Rather, half of it was taken forcefully) Shidou and Kotori were together in a dim room.

It would seem this was a place under a facility owned by < Ratatoskr> but, the details were not known. Since he was made to walk quite some distance from the entrance, this place was indistinct to any other residential area.

The width of the room size is around 20 tatami mats. Although there were tall tables placed here and there, there is nothing else than that and the space looks like a dance hall.

Originally, it seems to be more convenient if they used the < Fraxinus> meeting room but, as long as Origami and the spirit without her powers sealed Natsumi were inside the suspects, they can’t have that happen.

Thus------not long later, the sound of the room door slowly opening was produced.

And from there, 3 girls were slowly walking into the room.

"Kuku, how idealistic. It's a suitable stage for us to give judgment to your wicked king"

The 1st person was Kaguya.

"Amazing, it's like we are in a secret base---"

The 2nd person was Miku.

"……"

And the last------Origami.

After including Shidou and Kotori who were originally in the room, it would become 5 people.

All of the remaining suspects in the current situation were right now gathered in this room.

Yes. That was what Shidou requested Kotori.

He wanted her to make an environment where he can talk with all of the remaining suspects, with everyone of them gathered in one place.

In order to get his last conviction, that was a factor that was needed by all cost.

And-----there is one more. It was his honest thoughts for wanting everyone's new opinion.

Everyone should have been given a rough explanation about the situation from the <Ratotoskr> organization members. Maybe it was lucky or unlucky---------this was a method that could only be used because the remaining people know about the existence of the [Spirit].

"-----Glad all of you could turn up."

After Kotori said that, the 3 girls were looking at her in a slight perplexed manner while walking towards Shidou and Kotori.

Suu Shidou then breathed in and looked at the girls in turns.

"……everyone, I think you all should have heard it. First off ……let me apologize. Sorry. Everyone got dragged into this because of me……I am really sorry"

He then took a deep bow. When he did that, he could hear a commotion from everyone.

"Fuun, do not mind it. Rather than that, I rather have you apologize to us for keeping quiet about something this important"

"U—n, so that means that date was a part of the investigation. That's a little disappointing"

"……."

Everyone said. Shidou took another deep bow before slowly lifting his head.

"I know it was selfish. But……..I beg of you all. Everyone……..please lend me your strength……..!"

He said that as if he was appealing. And, everyone uniformly made a strong nod.-----except for one person.

"Shidou"

Maintaining silence from just now, Origami stared at Shidou while opening her mouth.

"What does this mean"

"! Sorry, Origami. But, I beg you. I need your strength"

Origami immediately cast her eyes downwards and shook her head, when Shidou said that as if he was appealing to her.

"I don't want you to misunderstand. It is only natural for me to lend Shidou my strength. Even more if it is regarding spirits.------- What I want to ask, isn't those"

"Eh? You're saying……..."

"Where is this place? Who was the one who explained the situation to us just now? I thought about this before. What on earth do you have connections with?"

"Th-that's……"

Shidou hesitated by reflex. It's true that, it was a normal question from Origami's perspective.

"Your wrinkles will increase if you worry about small details"

Standing in the left side beside Shidou, Kotori replied with that. Origami's thorn filled sights were poured towards Kotori's direction.

"……Itsuka Kotori"

"……what?"

Kotori responded with half her eyes opened from Origami's voice. Both of them looked at each other for a while.

Thinking back, both of them had a deep fate. Once, Origami doubted Kotori as her parent's revenge and initiated an attack at her before.

In the end, understanding it was a misunderstanding; Shidou managed to stop both of them by interfering but---------the strange relationship between them did not disappear.

But. After Origami cast her eyes downwards without saying anything, she made a small sigh and averted her sights from Kotori.

"-------I will listen to what you can say later. Anyway, I have no objection in cooperating with Shidou"

"A-aah……..Thank you, Origami"

"I don't mind. But"

"But?"

"Since you call me suddenly, I was a little, expectant"

"…….That's……...how should I say it, sorry"

He could only say it like that. He lowered his head slightly…… ……in reality, starting from Origami, everyone was brought together by Reine and he has no idea what method she used to call them out.

"Kuku, it's settled then"

At that moment, Kaguya spread both her hands, and raised a loud voice while taking a pose.

"Let's get it started then. The selection ceremony to bring out the atrocity lurking within us out to the light!"

"A-ra, you look quite into this"

"Isn't that obvious!"

Kaguya spread out her hands exaggeratedly when Kotori said that.

"That insolent person that kidnapped Yuzuru is inside here right!? Then I will find that person and unless she pays a suitable compensation------I will not feel satisfied……!"

Half-way through her words, her normal self came out. Kaguya probably noticed that and *Kohon* made a cough before retaking a pose.

“Anyway! I will definitely find that spirit that made Yuzuru and the rest disappear!”

After saying that, she gripped her fist tightly. Even from the side-view, it looks like strength was put into it. Mostly likely, she wants to direct all of the saved up emotions that had nowhere to go because of Yuzuru’s sudden disappearance towards the criminal.

“Yeah yeah, I understand you are into this so, calm down for now”

Kotori lifted the chupa chups she has in her mouth and moved her lips.

“The situation is as what you have been explained before entering this room. There is one spirit with the power of transformation inside here and we have to find her no matter what . All of the investigation results have been collected into these documents. If you have something bothering you or a question, we don’t mind it no matter how small it is. Please go ahead and say it”

After saying that, she showed a table nearby. There were several sets of documents suppressed by double clips placed on it.

Everyone took the documents and glanced through it for a while.

And after a while, Miku *fuuu* sighed.

"I see--……the question darling asked at that time had these meanings"

"……Darling?"

Origami twitched her eyebrows. Shidou hurried and let out his voice.

"We-well, why don't we leave that for later"

"……"

After Origami was discontent while honestly keeping quiet, she once again dropped her sights on the documents.

And as if to replace that, *piin* Kaguya erected her finger.

"So, Shidou. What kind of appearance does that Natsumi have"

"Eh? Aah, that's-------"

"-------it's repulsive, a horribly unattractive face"

Kotori interrupted Shidou's words and said that.

"For example, she had face like a toad that got run over by a car. Her droopy eyes very far apart and her nose was heading upwards like a pig, her skin was completely filled with pockmarks like the craters on the moon. She has a fat body; a terrible body so much that it made me thinks her bust waist hip might have the same value. And, anyway her face is just plain big. Mostly like around three heads together. Somehow rather than spirit, she was more of a monster"

With a serious look, Kotori continuously explained Natsumi appearance. But all of it, does not even bear a slight similarity to Shido's memories and was obviously garbage information.

"Oi, Kotori……"

When Shidou was about to say something, Kotori [Shh] erected one finger up.

At that moment, he guessed it. Most definitely, this was to lure out Natsumi's reaction from inside them. Being told slanderous like that, there are not that many people that would not take notice to that. Even if it isn't shown in their expression or actions, there should be some kind of response coming from the observation device installed in this room.

But----------

"……..there is none of that response"

Reine's voice was heard in Shidou's right ear.

Kotori probably received the same announcement. *Tsk* she clicked her tongue and operated the small terminal placed on top of the table.

"……That's a joke. Please look at this"

At the same time Kotori said that, Natsumi's figure was shown out on the terminal's screen. It was a beautiful girl.

"Eeh……. That's totally different from what you said. Kotori-chan you are such a scary child"

Sweat was flowing down on Miku's cheeks while she brought her eyebrows together. However, Kotori did not really bother about that and urged her with a [Is there anything else] question.

"However, I am a little curious, on how come Shidou and Kotori was doing this but still unable to catch even her tails"

The next one who said that was Kaguya.

"In the first place, is it true that Natsumi is really inside here? Isn't it a possibility that she lied and was actually disguised as someone else, and is immersed in joy looking at Shidou panicking? "

After saying that, Kaguya tilted her head.

"……..of course, that possibility isn't zero. But--------"

Kotori folded her arms while making an eye signal to Shidou. Shidou tilted his head slightly forward to respond to her.

"Aah. Although I didn't talk to her for that long…….most likely, I think she wasn't lying"

"Houu? How can you say that? The opponent is a spirit that made Yuzuru and the rest disappear you know? I think it would be hard to believe her"

"Hnn, how should I put it……I felt that Natsumi holds a strong confidence in her abilities. And also, Natsumi said clearly that [I am inside one of these]. Leaving aside from her strikes in the gap of the rules, I think she won't obviously break the rules"

"Fumu……."

Kaguya made a difficult groan before nodding to show she agreed.

"I see. Well, it was you who has a direct conversation with Natsumi. I'll believe in that"

After saying that, Kaguya returned her sights to the document.

And after a while, Origami lifted her face after she finished reading all the documents.

"Shidou. Is it possible to show me the photos and card send by the spirit <Witch>?"

"Aah, of course"

After Shidou nodded, he took out a white envelope from the bag he brought and handed it to Origami.

"……."

Having received the documents, Origami took the photos and card from inside and lined up on top the table. From the side, Kaguya and Miku took a peek at that.

"Fuun……I see. So it means it was taken while hiding."

"Wait! Half-my eyes are opened--!"

Kaguya snorted and Miku was *puri**puri* getting angry. However, Origami did not stop to bother about them and crawls her sights on the lined up photos and card one by one.

And, after a moment of silence and hand placing on her chin, she lifted her face.

"--------there is one thing I want to confirm"

"Aah, what is it?"

"Is it possible that the <Witch>'s transformation ability can transform into something else other than spirits and humans?"

"Eh……..?"

Being told that. Shidou opened his eyes wide.

"Other than spirit and human……..?"

"Yes. To put it more specifically, it is possible for her to transform into a material that does not conduct life activities, or, into an existence clearly with a different volume from her original form, that is what I meant. For example, changing into a size that can be gathered on the palm or thin like a paper"

Shidou made a small nod from Origami's words.

Now that he thinks back, the first time when Shidou met her, Natsumi turned the AST members into comical characters. If it is possible from a third person, then it isn't strange for her to transform her body into something else other than humans.

"It might be possible. But, to be able to change her body to different extreme sizes……..I am not sure about that"

"You can't say it is not impossible, that's it?"

"Aah……..that would be the case"

"Yes"

Origami nodded. Then sitting next to her, Miku *pon* hit her hand as if she thought of something.

"Eh, is it perhaps--……"

While saying that, she pointed towards the photo lined up on the table.

"The Spirit-san might be disguised as one of these photos……..something like that, is what you meant?"

"Photo……"

Shidou placed his hand on his chin. It's true that……..he can't completely deny it.

"I am inside one of these. Can you guess which one am I? "

Yes. Thinking from only the words, according to the words [Inside these]------Natsumi might be inside one of the photo's itself.

"Yes"

After Origami took a glance at Miku, she nodded.

"Normally, if you were told [I am inside one of these] after being shown the photos then, you will think that the Spirit will be one of the people taken in the photo.------however in this case, it's not like it was stated to be like that"

She glared at the photos lined up on the table and continued.

"In the first place, I had an odd feeling on the rules itself. As time passes, the suspects will decrease. It's true that it is an effective way to plant uneasiness onto Shidou. However, at the same time, she will suffer a risk of making herself easier to be found.------if she has the confidence to never be found then, there is no way she would take this route"

Shidou nodded in Origami's words. That was the odd feeling Shidou has been feeling the whole time.

Hearing that talk, Kaguya *fuun* exhaled while folding her arms.

"------I see. But, even if that is the case, what should we do about it? There are 12 photos you know? Don't tell me you are going to designated each of them one by one?"

"There is no need for that"

After Origami said that, she piled up the photos spread out on the table.

"Origami?"

"Look"

And, in the next instant.

When he thought Origami placed her hands into her pocket, * Kaa* such a sound was produced and a knife was piercing through the piled up photos. The blade was completely penetrated and has reached until the table.

"iiih……..!?"

"This is the shortest and fastest method to confirm"

After Origami said that without moving any of her eyebrows, she twisted the knife pierced into the photo and gouged out.

---but, the photos did not show any response.

"…….It would seem, it was wrong"

Origami said it in a slight disappointment while putting the knife into her pocket. Shidou wiped of the sweat that he had no idea when it appeared off his forehead with his hands…… while thinking that if Natsumi was really disguised as the photo then, what on earth would have happened.

"Fuun, back to the starting point again huh"

"Buuut, I think what Origami-san said is true. But, it doesn't feel like she wants to enjoy the thrill. I think she is striking within the rule gaps, so that she would never be found. That's because, there are only 4 suspects remaining at the current point you know---? Isn't it at the probability rate where we might guess who she is, even if it is a random guess"

Miku said that while placing her finger at her chin. Shidou agreed with her. He made a small nod.

However. Kaguya made a difficult face and glared at Miku.

"So what are you saying? Are you saying Natsumi isn't inside the suspects? Didn't Shidou just deny that just now"

"I-I did say that but……"

"Don't tell me, you are trying to make us think Natsumi isn't within one of us"

Kaguya said that with half her eyes opened. When she did that, Miku *muu* turned sulky and distorted her mouth to a へ character.

"What do you mean by that---. I will get angry even if it is Kaguya-chan"

"Fuun, are you panicking because I hit a bulls-eye? That's even more suspicious. There is a black wave coming out from your back "

"Wait, please calm down both of you……"

Kotori hurried and rushed between Kaguya and Miku. Both of them glared at each other through Kotori for a while.

"Now shouldn't be the time to be quarreling. Shidou, please say something"

"……."

However, Shidou was silently pressing his mouth while observing everyone's behavior.

"Shidou…….? What's wrong"

"……Aah, like I guessed, perhaps-------"

After Shidou mumbled to himself, *Gari**Gari* he scratched his head.

"Origami, could you show me the photos a bit?"

"Here"

Origami handed the over the piled up photos to him.

Shidou lined up the photos filled with holes because of the knife on his hand, and started staring fixed at them.

"The remaining suspects is 4 people……but, no matter how much I investigate, I can't find someone like Natsumi inside here…… striking within the rule gaps, so that she would never be found ……[I am inside one of these. Can you guess which one am I?]……."

That was the single possibility discovered by Shidou after continuously thinking and close investigation of several information regardless of whether it was day or night.

He was *butsu**butsu* mumbling like chanting a magic and made a thin sigh.

And while crawling his sights to everyone, Shidou let out his words.

"------Maybe, Natsumi isn't within any of you"

""""……huh…….?""""

Everyone opened their eyes wide when Shidou said that.

Nonetheless it was only natural. Even though he purposely gathered all of them to find Natsumi, he says that Natsumi might not be within one of them. It could be better off putting the cart before the horse.

"Wait a second, what are you saying Shidou?"

"That's right. Isn't it different from what you said just now"

Kotori and Kaguya said that while raising their eyebrows. But, Shidou swung his head to the sides.

"No, what I am saying wasn't regarding Natsumi isn't one of the people inside the photos. To the end, I am saying *she isn't in the currently remaining 4 people*"

And, when Shidou said that.

"……!"

Maybe she guessed the meaning of those words, late by a beat, Kotori twitched her eyebrows.

She then started flipping through the documents on her head with tremendous speed. Kaguya and Miku were blankly looking at that manner.

"I see……. impossible……..but if that is case then ……."

"Ehh? Eh? Wait a second, I haven't agreed yet so explain to me"

When Miku asked like a pest, Kotori agreed while sweat is flowing down her forehead.

"……..yes. Maybe, this is---------"

And-------the moment Kotori was about to say something.

The space in the center of the room distorted in an instant, and a pale radiance was flowing out from that spot-------

The Angel <Haniel> appeared.

"""""""Wha……..!?"""""""

Everyone's dismay echoed throughout the room.

Shidou looked over to the room clock in panic. 1130pm-------there was still 30 minutes left until 12am.

"What does this mean? Today hasn't passed yet!"

When Shidou shouted, as if to answer him, <Haniel>'s tip part was deployed and Natsumi's figure was floating in the mirror.

"--------Ufufu, don't be panicked like that. Since this is the final night so, let's have more fun shall we?"

Natsumi continued with a joyful smile.

"It's a special rule for the final night. Today's designation time, is 10 times faster than usual, a 10 minutes. If you could not

guess who am I in that 10 minutes, or you did not designate anyone, I will give you another 10 minutes for designation again. Finally, it would be your lost if you can't guess who I am until it turns to the last suspect. Then I will be taking the [Existence] of everyone over here right now"

"Kuh……!"

Kotori making a click with her tongue could be heard, when Shidou frowned his face while saying that.

"30 minutes……..huh. You thought of something nasty again"

"What……..do you mean?"

"------there are 4 remaining suspects"

Origami was the one that answered Shidou's question, not Kotori. While glaring at Natsumi, she continued on with a quiet tone.

"Starting now, by any chance we fail to designate the criminal once it will reach a time over and by the time it reaches 12am, only one suspect will be left remaining. Which means, <Witch> is planning to end this game at the same time with the date changing"

"……..guh"

After Shidou gripped his fist, he once again brought his sights to the girls in the rooms again.

Kotori, Origami, Kaguya, Miku.

Everyone's expression was colored with nervousness, anger and uneasiness. From a glance, it doesn't look like there is a Spirit that steals everyone [Existence] inside here.

But, as if to stop such thoughts for Shidou, Natsumi continued her words.

"Aah, oh yeah oh yeah. Since everyone is gathered together, I don't mind if someone else other than Shidou-kun designates me today. But of course, there are only 10 minutes per turn for the designation timing so, think properly before designating. By any chance the votes are in the same values, I will have that designation voided"

"……..you sure, did as you like"

Shidou unintentionally raised his eyebrows from the bewildering added additional rule.

But, he can't afford to stay in discord for too long. There are only 30 minutes left. And, there are only 3 more times left to designate Natsumi.

If he lets that go-------everyone here will be erased by <Haniel>. Failure is definitely not an option.

And, at that moment, Kotori brought her eyes towards Natsumi being shown on <Haniel>'s mirror.

"-----the timing is perfect. I have something I want to confirm with the game star"

"A-ra, what is it?"

"This rule says you are inside these photos. One person will disappear per day by the chances of the guessing is failed. By the chances of the designated criminal's name is wrong, the mistaken person will disappear too……am I right?"

When Kotori said that, Natsumi shrugged her shoulders to play a fool.

"Ohh, I wonder…….is what I wanted to say but, well, I' ll answer you that much.-----Your recognition is not wrong"

"……..I see"

After Natsumi said that, Kotori made a small snort while sending her sights to Shidou.

He replied those sights with a nod. The question just now was exactly the same as what Shidou is trying to do.

"Wha-what does this mean? Hey Kotori, will you explain?"

Kaguya brought her eyebrows closer while saying that.

When she did that, Kotori threw the documents to the table and let her hear her words.

"……..perhaps, we might have made a big misunderstanding"

"What…….?"

Kaguya tilted her head from Kotori's words. Kotori sorted the photos lined up on the table while continuing the rest.

"We are trying to find Natsumi inside the people taken inside these photos"

"Umu……..but that is the game's rule right?"

"Yes. The previously given condition is correct. But---------if the thoughts after that, was completely been directed then"

While saying that, Kotori separated the photos on the table into 2 groups.

The arrangements were Origami, Kotori, Kaguya, and Miku these four in the left side. And, in the right side the, remaining 8 people.

Basically, it's the current remaining suspects, and everyone else that has already disappeared.

"Wha-what do you…….mean?"

"What Tobiichi Origami and Miku said just now has been continuously bugging me. The remaining 4 suspects here right now have received most detailed inspections and analysis inside the original 12 peoples. Of course, the opponent is a spirit. It is not strange at all even if she holds a power that crosses our predictions . But, by any chance-------if Natsumi was *already* missing from within us, then everything will make sense"

"Wha……..!?"

"Eeeh!?"

"……!"

The same time with Kaguya and Miku raising a dismayed voice , Origami opened her eyes wide and started flipping through the documents she was holding to.

And after crawling her eyes through the sentences, she slowly lifted her face.

"------I see. That's true, that nothing of that was written"

"Wai-wait a second, does that mean……."

Miku pressed her forehead to calm her confused head down. Shidou nodded in agreement.

"…….Yes. Thinking normally, the criminal exists within the remaining suspects.-----but, this isn't a detective novel. Even if they have disappeared, it doesn't mean the suspects have died.

There was no rule written stating that Natsumi isn't going to be the one to disappear the last in the end of the day"

""…….!?""

When Shidou said that, Kaguya and Miku gasped and their eyes turned into circles and opened wide.

Yes. That was------one of the possibilities Shidou has reached.

The remaining 4 suspects that does not show anything suspicious no matter how much he inspects.

The game rule that becomes disadvantageous to Natsumi the further it advances.

If his hypothesis is correct then……everything will connect.

"Then Shidou, Kotori. Are you saying Natsumi is within the already disappeared suspects instead of us right here?"

Kaguya asked with sweat flowing down her cheeks. When she did that, Kotori made a difficult face and placed her hand on her chin.

"More specifically----------even within the number of people that has already disappeared, it was someone else other than the people who has disappeared when Shidou designated them. As expected it would be a violation to the rule if she acts innocent when she is being designated by Shidou"

After saying that, Kotori excluded the photos of Yoshino, Tama-chan-sensei, and Mai from the photos separated in the right side of the table.

The remaining ones were Yuzuru, Ai, Tohka, Tonomachi and Mii, these 5 photos. They were all people that has been erased by Natsumi by the end of the day.

"Wai-wait a minute---. Doesn't that make it even harder compared to now-----? Aren't you just increasing the numbers of suspects!" Miku raised a screaming voice. It's true that, there are 4 remaining suspects here. In addition to there being only 3 chances left, the choices has been widened.

However. Origami swung her head to deny that.

"-----It's true that would be the case when looking at the numbers. However, in reality that isn't the case. From what I saw from the documents, there is only one person that has almost certainly guaranteed their safety zone"

"Eh……?"

Shidou raised his eyebrows from Origami's words. Shidou has only reached the Natsumi candidates to the end and has not gained the final absolute material yet.

But, Kotori nodded as if to agree with Origami's words.

"Yes. It's true that once that person disappear after designation, the thought of that person being Natsumi will disappear from our

minds. If that is the case, then it would exactly be the same as escaping to the safety zone”

Kotori continued while distorting her eyebrows.

“But, even if that is the case, the first condition is same with everybody. No matter if the possibility rate is low, if that person were to be designated by Shidou before disappearing then, Natsumi would be the one to lose.-------Shidou, think back properly. There should only be one person. Depending on coincidence, there is only one person that managed to run away from your designation.”

Being told that. Shidou immersed in thoughts.

And, immediately he came in conclusion to the person Kotori and Origami was talking about.

Yes. That’s----------

“Don’t tell me……Yuzuru…….?”

Shidou called out the name of the girl that disappeared on the first night and gulped. When he did that, Kotori and Origami cast their eyes downwards as if to show their agreements.

But, the moment she heard that, Yuzuru’s sister Kaguya distorted her face in displeasure.

“What did you say? Shidou, are you saying Yuzuru is the criminal?”

After saying that, she quickly brought her face closer. Shidou swung his head in panic.

"Wait a second. I did not-------"

But, Kotori continued as if to interrupt Shidou's words.

"It is also in the documents but…….it was starting from the 2nd day when <Haniel> appeared to our house to urge us to designate the criminals" It's just as what Kotori says; <Haniel> did not appear on the first day.

Which means------Shidou was not given the means to designate the criminal.

On that evening, Yuzuru disappeared because of <Haniel>. At that time he was shaken from the fact that the suspect disappeared but----------now that he think back about it, he had no idea why <Haniel> did not appear on the first day.

"In the night of the first day. Yuzuru disappeared. But, in other words, doesn't that have the same meaning as it being impossible to designate her as a criminal?"

Kotori said more. It felt like Kaguya was feeling disgusted about the fact that Yuzuru was being doubted but, maybe because there was no materials that could be seen to be used to object, she kept her mouth shut.

Kotori made a sigh and looked at Natsumi.

"……..That's one ill-natured way of thinking. But as a result, that careful precaution has instead caught your tail.---------- the one you were disguised as was, Yuzuru"

Kotori said it, in a confident manner.

"……."

But, Shidou was in thought.

It's true that the logic was connected. However, for some reason . He felt there was something decisive still missing.

"Fuun……is that okay?"

Natsumi replied in a carefree manner.

"It's perfectly 10 minutes. Those who agrees with Kotori-chan's opinion please raise your hand"

When Natsumi said that, Kotori, also Origami, Miku, and Kaguya with hesitation, all raised their hands.

"…….Shidou?"

Kotori faced over to him in suspicion. But, even after that, Shidou did not raise his hands.

Natsumi *Nii* raised the side of her lips.

"Okay, time over. Because of the large number of agreements, Yamai Yuzuru-chan will be designated"

After saying that, Natsumi being shown on <Haniel>'s mirror, clicked her fingers. When she did that------

"Wha------"

Standing over there, when they thought Origami's body made a pale glow, she was sucked into <Haniel>'s mirror.

"O-Origami…….!?"

"-------Fufu, Wr.on.g. The concept was interesting but, how regretful~"

Natsumi laughed in an unbearable happy manner, and made a circle with her fingers as if to provoke Shidou and the group.

"Well, since the designated Yuzuru-chan has already been disappeared, so it is a little regretful only one person could be erased.------alright, designation time reset. Please choose the next designated person. Fufu, there are only 2 more chances. Can you guess who I am?"

"N-no way, impossible……."

Kotori's face was filled with horror.

"Are you saying Yuzuru isn't it…….!? The-then who on earth ……..!"

After saying that, she placed her elbow on the table while making a shocked expression.

But that was only natural.------everything has returned back to the beginning in this situation. There is no time left until the next designation. Everyone's heartbeats were getting faster but, they knew it as if they were holding it on their hands.

"Kuh……"

She carried her head while facing towards the documents again.

Yuzuru wasn't Natsumi. Then is it either one of the remaining, Tohka, Ai, Tonomachi, and Mii. But even if that is the case, there was no other people Shidou can think off that has clearly ran away from his designation other than Yuzuru. Impossible, did Natsumi really exposed herself into danger just to enjoy the match……?

However, if he think like that then, the condition itself will become meaningless. If Natsumi was enjoying the match then, she might simply be within the remaining 3 girls here now too---------

Thoughts were going around in circles in his head. Shidou hit the temple of his forehead with his fingers to calm the chaos in his head down.

"Fufu, Ahahahaha!"

And, wondering how much time has passed, Natsumi was hugging her stomach while laughing as if she was enjoying everyone's dismay.

“Well, well, how terrible. The famous detective reasoning ended already? If you don’t hurry up and find me, then everyone will have to get along with each other inside the mirror world you know? Fufu, but rest assured. Onee-san[8E 1] will properly use your figures effectively”

“You…….bastard!”

Kaguya kicked the ground and kicked towards <Haniel>.

“How dare you do this to Yuzuru…….! To Tohka! To Yoshino! To Origami! To Tama-chan! To Ai, Mai Mii! And Shidou’s friend…….! Give them back! Give them back……..!”

But, there was no way that attack would work on the Angel. <Haniel> made a pale radiance, and Kaguya was easily blown away.

“Guah……!”

Her back was slammed towards the wall, and Kaguya leaked an anguish moan.

“Kaguya!”

“……it’s useless, stop it! Even if you use limit break your Reiryoku, the current you have no power to do anything about the Angel”

Kotori said that like a groan while making a stern expression.

"Bu-but even if that is the case, if this goes on……!"

And, the moment Kaguya was about to punch <Haniel> after hardening her fist, Natsumi once again let out her voice.

"-----Alright, when you were doing this and that, it's already time. It looks like you all haven't designated yet so, what are you all going to do?"

It seems 10 minutes has passed before anyone knew about it. Natsumi crawled her sights as if to survey everyone.

"Looks like you all didn't designate. Then……."

"---It's Tohka!"

Around the time Natsumi was about to say something, Kotori shouted.

"Ko-Kotori? Is Tohka Natsumi?"

"……..honestly, it was a random guess. But, we can't allow out valuable criminal designation chance to slip away"

"Tohka-chan is alright right?"

Natsumi asked back. Shidou also has no one he could think of. He nodded painfully.

When he did that, Kaguya's body glowed palely this time-------and was sucked into <Haniel>.

"U-uwah…….!"

"Kaguya!"

"How regretful. Tohka-chan is also wrong.---------alright, there are only 10 minutes left to 12am. The next designation is the last chance. Fufu, well, will you be able to guess who I am?"

And, silence visited the room once again.

But, that also did not last very long. Miku carried her head while shouting.

"Wha-Wha-what the hell is this…….! I don't want this anymore! Let me go back…….!"

"Calm down! Calm down Miku! It will be what Natsumi wants if you break down!"

"Da-darling…….that's because, that's because…….!"

Miku stopped large drops of tears on her eyes and made a hiccup.

Shidou calmed Miku down while clenching his teeth.

---Something. There was something decisive still missing. Natsumi is within the people <Haniel> erased……..there is clearly no mistake in this. But, he does not know who that person is.

"That's right……something----------there must be something definitely. There is no way this snake lady would challenge us without preparing anything. Something that would completely place her in the safety zone, there must be something……..!"

Kotori has sweat flowing down her forehead while turning the pages of the documents violently.

Shidou brought his eyes at the photos lined up on the table.

Erased by Natsumi, there are 3 people that have yet been designated.

But, is Natsumi really within one of these. Even he no longer understood that anymore. Shidou placed his hands on his chest to calm down the heartbeat that was turning faster because of the circumstances while glaring at the documents and photo's alternately.

However, the answer could not come out no matter how much he think.

"------Alright, sorry to barge in when you all are in trouble, but there are 5 minutes left"

And, Natsumi then *kusu**kusu* laughed while raising her voice.

Shidou gasped. When he checked the clock, it's true that 5 minutes has already passed. Clearly, their body time clocks have turned shorter compared to just now. Impatience called out to dismay, and the dismay caused their decision making to collapse. Shidou was making shaking exhales while scratching his head.

"Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaah! No more! I don't want this anymoreeeeeeeeeee!"

Like that, maybe she could not bear the nervousness brought to its limits, Miku disheveled her hair and shouted.

"Darling…….i-i-i……!"

After her teeth *Gachi**gachi* clattered in a dismayed manner, Miku quickly took off her hair ornament and made Shidou hold it.

"Mi-Miku? What are you---------"

"Ev-even if I disappear, please don't forget about me……, remember me, when, y-you look at the hair ornament……"

"Why are you saying something so ill-omened! I won't let you disappear! I will definitely……..find Natsumi!"

After shouting, he gave Miku's hair ornament back. But Miku, did not try to receive it.

"Miku…….?"

"Tha-that's because……if I am wearing it, won't it disappear together with me when I disappear…….! So-something like not leaving anything on darling's side…….I don't want that!"

"What are you--------"

And.

At that moment.

"----------"

Shidou felt an electrifying feeling flowing through his body.

Origami disappeared, Kaguya disappeared-----and the remaining people were Miku and Kotori, these two only leaving Shidou out of the equation. What's more, the countdown was steadily being continued and after a few minutes, the last person will be erased by <Haniel>.

A desperate situation like a painting. Normally, it would not be strange if his given up face would peek out. But---------Shidou trembled from the possibility that scratched his mind.

The hole in the rule Shidou found. Natsumi is not limited to the people that have already disappeared.

The possibility Origami presented. Natsumi is able to transform into something else than humans.

And then, just now, the words Miku said.

---It will disappear together, if I was worn on the body.

That connected all of the odd feeling clouding Shidou's mind into one.

"Don't tell, me……..."

"Shidou……..?"

"Da-darling?"

When Shidou released a half-dumbfounded voice, Kotori and Miku looked over to him in doubt.

But right now, Shidou does not have the leisure to reply to both of their replies. He was only standing there, and connecting the information inside his head.

---Thinking back.

This game was strange from the beginning.

Just several lines of words were given at first. But as day passes by, several various factors were added on.

Taking of it that was increased normally as the basis, Shidou, Kotori and Reine conjured up the rule Natsumi set up.

That is. If that is what Natsumi targeted.

At a glance, the additional rules could only be thought as selfish acts but, if it was something used for hiding a single event then.

"[I am inside one of these. Can you guess which one am I?]……."

While mumbling the rule that he had put in his mouth many times already; Shidou dropped his sight onto one from the other photos lined up on the table.

There was one point he had completely not bothered about until now.

A single photo, that is clearly different from the other 11 papers.

"……..Natsumi. There is one thing I want to confirm"

He sends his sights towards Natsumi and asked.

"Fuun? What is it? I won't listen if it is a beg for your life"

Natsumi replied back in a calm and composed manner. However, Shidou did not borrow his ears to her provocation and continued his words.

"----------there are 12 papers of photos you sent over. But, are there……*really 12 suspects*?"

"Fufu, Well, I wonder about that"

Even when Shidou said that, Natsumi replied back in a not so panicked manner.

But---------that was enough for Shidou to be convinced.

That's because, Natsumi has replied back once.------to the Kotori 's question previously.

But even so, she did not answer Shidou's question and evaded it.

Which means, that would only serve as support to Shidou's speculations.

He recalled back the conversation he had with the suspect few days back.

"Ah……."

When he did that, the small matter that he wasn't really bothered about at that time, revived back inside his mind.

There is no----mistake.

Shidou moisten his throat with saliva and slowly lifted his face.

"---------I've got it, Kotori, Miku"

""……..!?""

When Shidou said that quietly, Kotori and Miku gasped-------- Natsumi twitched the side of her eyebrows.

"Yo-you've got it…….you mean who Natsumi is disguised as?"

"I-is it true, Darling"

"Aah. It's thanks to everyone. If it was me alone…….I will definitely not have found it"

"……..Who on earth is it?"

Kotori made a doubtful face and asked. Shidou took a deep breath before continuing.

"We made a mistake in the first condition. Natsumi did not move herself to the safety zone quickly. In the first place…….. she was already in the safety zone"

"……what do you mean?"

"I was convinced from Natsumi's reply just now. Natsumi----------*not once has she said there were 12 suspects at all*"

"Eh……?"

Miku opened her eyes wide and started counting the lined up photos. But of course, there were only 12 photos lined up there.

Shidou slowly swung his head.

"Yes. There are only 12 photos. But, the one who defined the number of suspects were us, not Natsumi. The real suspects were

13 people-------no, more specifically, *there were 12 people and 1 existence*……!"

"……!"

Kotori made a surprised face from Shidou's words.

She then looked towards a certain photo.

"Impossible, there is no way…….but, it's true that if that was the case then------"

"Darling, there is no time left, there are 30 seconds left!"

Miku raised a shrill voice. After Shidou took a deep breath, he slowly raised his right hand and----------*pin* erected his index finger and directed it to <Haniel>.

And then,

"You are-----Natsumi"

He pointed his fingers at <Haniel> and continued.

"Am I right, ***Yoshinon***……!"

After saying that, Natsumi being shown by <Haniel> made a serious face different from the fearless smile until now and stared back at Shidou.

"…….Yoshinon, huh. Is it the puppet Yoshino-chan wears "

"Aah, that's right. You were disguised as Yoshinon, these past few days"

"…….Can I hear the reason?"

Natsumi stroke her chin with hand while asking. Shidou stared at her emerald eyes while resuming his words.

"--------It was thanks to Origami and Miku I could notice that. The possibility of Natsumi disguising as something else other than humans……..and, the fact of objects being worn on the suspects will disappear along with the suspect. When I combined both of it and think, the only thing I could think about was Yoshinon"

"……..."

Natsumi was expressionless while folding her arms. Shidou did not mind that and continued.

"And, I noticed that possibility……I recalled back something strange"

"Something strange?"

Kotori asked. Shidou did not avert his sights away from Natsumi and made a small nod.

"Aah. The first day of the investigation, when Yoshino and Yoshinon were dressed up and came to our house----------I was surprised from Yoshinon appearing from the gap of the door at first and accidentally threw my cellphone at it"

"Now that I think about it……I think I've seen that video before"

"But, Yoshinon dodged it perfectly. It was as if, it saw the cellphone flying towards it.-------Yoshino's eyes were clearly at the opposite side of the door"

"Ah……!"

Kotori opened her eyes wide.

Yes. It was forgetful since he always talks to it normally but, that is a personality that will only appear through the puppet, when Yoshino wears the puppet [Yoshinon] on her left hand. All of its senses should be dependent on Yoshino.

Thinking normally----------it should not be able to evade.

"Also…….there is one more. When I threw a conversation about an event before to confirm, Yoshinon said that it was in Origami's house. It's true that, when Yoshino lost Yoshinon, I found Yoshinon inside Origami's room. But---------- there was no way it could know. Yoshinon is just a puppet, when it is separated from Yoshino"

Yes. There is no way Yoshinon would know. Something likes the place where it was being kept.

But, Natsumi knew about it. Maybe she traced back the memories when she was transformed as Shidou……..or maybe, during the time she was trying to make an assessment on

who she was going to transform as, she might have found out about Yoshinon from Origami's memories but, she was holding an information that Yoshinon should have not known.

"You accidentally let out your voice. Your movements and voice, you should have left it all to Yoshino……! Maybe you were trying to clear the suspicions away from complementing the information, or maybe you planned to give hints feigning in composure, I don't know about that but, for just one word, you accidentally let out your words……!"

After saying that, he pointed at <Haniel> once more.

"Well, how about that, Natsumi! Are you disguised as Yoshinon or not!?"

"……..That's--------"

Being shown on <Haniel>, Natsumi stumbled on her words and had sweat flowing down her cheeks.

---in an instant.

Being pointed by Shidou, <Haniel> started wriggling.

Next off, the same time with the shaking immediately intensifying, there were cracks starting to appear on <Haniel>'s mirror tip part. And, the mirror released a strong radiance different from the pale light released until now.

The light that looks like several giant search lights collected together, was filling the room. Shidou covered his face in reflex.

“Kuh-------“

“Wha-what is this……..!”

“Kyaaa!”

The radiance calmed down after a while and his slightly burned out eyes have finally gotten used to the brightness.

At that moment, Shidou noticed. Inside the room, there were several people who were not there a moment ago, lying on the floor.

Yes. All of them---------were his comrades erased by <Haniel>.

“! Everyone!”

After Shidou shouted, a few number of them pressed their heads while slowly raising their body.

“Wh-where…….is this…….”

“! Did I……..come back?”

“…….uh”

Tohka, Kaguya, and Origami, each of them blinked their eyes in order. In the next moment, maybe Kaguya understood the situation; she looked around and ran towards Yuzuru who was senseless.

"Yuzuru! Yuzuru!"

Kaguya shook Yuzuru's body. And after an instant, Yuzuru made a small cough.

"Hazy. Kagu……ya. You sure are noisy……as usual"

"! Yuzuru…….!"

Kaguya's face was mushy from tears while, hugging Yuzuru. Yuzuru was surprised for a while but, she immediately hugged Kaguya back gently.

Tama-chan-sensei, Tonomachi, Ai Mai Mii were still out cold. Judging from Tohka, Yuzuru and the rest waking up, rather than the sequence they were captured by <Haniel>, it might simply be because of the difference in Reiryoku resistance.

"Thank god…….everyone…….is safe……."

After Shidou made a big sigh, he collapsed to the ground weakly.

Although he designated the criminal impressively, honestly speaking, his heart was beating violently until it was as if it was going to explode.

"Shidou!"

Tohka ran towards Shidou.

"Wha-what happened? Where is this place?"

"…….ou"

However, because the thread of nervousness has snapped, Shidou does not have the spare energy left to replay Tohka's question in detail. He made a powerless smile and pats her head.

"Nu……, what's wrong Shidou……mu---……"

Tohka's face was suspicious at first but, not long later, she started ringing her throat comfortably.

It somehow turned fun so, Shidou's mouth relaxed.

But------at that moment.

On the side of Shidou's view, he discovered a certain silhouette.

"! That's…….!"

Just like everyone else, there was one girl squatting on the floor. --------the girl wearing a big witch hat.

"Natsumi…….!"

After Shidou's body once again made into tension, he borrowed Tohka's hand while standing up. He then slowly walked towards the foresaid girl.

It would seem, everyone in his surroundings has noticed Shidou's destination. Origami, Kotori, Miku, the Yamai sisters moved towards Natsumi as if to surround her.

"-------it's my win. Give it up"

"……uh"

When Shidou said that, Natsumi twitched her shoulders and slowly lifted her face.

And, the moment he saw Natsumi who was covered by the visor of the big hat,

"……..eh?"

Shidou, forgotten the nervousness from just now and made an idiotic voice.

The reason was simple. That's because the girl right now sinking down on the ground right now in front him, was different from the Natsumi in Shidou's memories.

She has a thin and small body. Her pale skin looked quite unhealthy and her small body height looked even smaller due her being hunched back. She has servile eyebrows and her eyes were distorted making it gloomy, there were no traces of confidence at all in that expression. Narrowly, her hair was the same color as the Natsumi inside Shidou's memories but, it wasn't the silky long hair but instead, it was a messy hairstyle which has not been tended to.

Over there was a small girl that doesn't look like that sexy Natsumi at all.

"Are……..you……Natsumi?"

Natsumi immediately touched her face and made a shocked face when Shidou said that while raising his eyebrows.

"A-a-aaaah…….!?"

She then raised a voice filled with despair and bends her back even further to hide her figure by grabbing the visor of her hat.

"What……..is going……."

"……I see"

When Shidou tilted his head, Kotori made a small snort.

"----------the one Shidou met before was the form she transformed into by using reiryoku."

"Ah……."

Shidou opened his eyes wide, and *pon* hit his hands.

"----------!"

Natsumi then raised a voice that could not become a scream and while hiding herself with her hat, she raised her right hand.

"<Haniel>…….!"

Responding to Natsumi's voice, <Haniel> floating on the center of the round table was gathered at Natsumi's hand. During that occasion, the broken mirror parts started recovering automatically.

In the next moment, Natsumi's body glowed and her figure transformed into the adult Onee-san which Shidou has seen before .

Natsumi hatefully, glared at Shidou and everyone before, releasing an oppressive voice from her throat.

"You found out……huh. You found out you found ouuuttttttttttttttt----------!"

She then twisted her body in rage while continuing.

"Not once but twice…….you saw my secret……! I-I won't forgive you. I will never forgive you. Every one of you, I won't let everyone of you off the hook easilyyyyyyyy!!"

After Natsumi raised a scream, she held up <Haniel> she was holding in her hands.

"<Haniel>------!!"

"Wha…….!?"

The moment Natsumi shouted, <Haniel>'s tip once again shined and---------and the room was covered with a dazzling light.

"Kuh--------"

He reflexively closed his eyes and frown his face.

Although the light calmed down after a few seconds. His eyes immediately got used to it and the room turned back to its dim self .

But.

"Shidou! Shidou!"

A higher pitched voice than usual was echoed from Tohka.



Shidou looked over there and--------his body froze.

“Shidou, what is this. I can’t move my body accordingly……..!?”

While saying that, she dragged her loose pajamas and Tohka who has an outer appearance of an elementary 3rd grade student, flapped her arms and legs.

“Wh-wha…….!”

But, the strange occurrence wasn’t limited to that.

When he tried looking at everyone around him, leaving the unconscious people aside, everyone was turned younger just like Tohka.

“What……..the hell is…….”

“Fufu-fufufufufufufufufu……..”

After Shidou raised his eyebrows, Natsumi who was holding up <Haniel> in the middle of the room made a dark laugh.

“Serve’s you all right……..! Allll of you, should just stay as a chibi[8E 2] forever…….!”

After Natsumi raised a loud laugh, she straddled onto <Haniel> and made a hole in the ceiling before flying into the sky.

“Wa-wait! Natsumi! Natsumiiiii!”

Even though he shouted, that high-pitched voice only fruitlessly echoed inside the room.

To be continued

Afterword

Long time no see, it is Tachibana Koushi. Na-tsu-mi.

I hereby present you [Date A Live 8 Natsumi Search].

This time again, I might have made a rare kind of configuration for myself. The Spirit who has transformation powers, Natsumi will disguised as someone in Shidou's surroundings, and Shidou has to find that criminal, that type of game.

Nonetheless, as one of the a concept, I wanted to make appearance spots for the characters that has less spotlight, since there is that, I will be very happy if you enjoy this comfortably.

The debuting Spirit this time- Natsumi. I will write this just in case but, the way to read her is [Natsumi]. The fixed top, [Kurumi]'s stronghold has yet been toppled but, it is another name hard to read like usual. This time too, after the sub-title was announced, my friend who reads [Miku] as [Yoshigyuu] sent several mails with weird ways to call her name attached to it. The first one I was most surprised was [Mospa] there is no mistake in that. I did not understand the meaning at first but, after thinking for a few seconds, I realized it was imitated from a certain burger shop. Now that I think back, I think when [Yamai] came out, it was read as [Habamai]. It is definitely not something cheap like misreading or it is hard to read. It is a scarier misinterpretation.

Well then, there is one announcement I would like to make.

A new comic version of the original book [Date A Live] has been announced in the monthly shounen ace! Waah! *clap**clap*!

It isn't a spin off and is a comic-lized version of the original book starting from [Tohka dead end].

The one supervising this is Inui Sekihiko-san. He acknowledged portraying cool actions so please expect it by all means.

Well then, the original book is made with assistance from various peoples.

Starting from the Illustrator Tsunako-san, supervisor-san and the designer Kusano-san, other than them were the people helping with the publishing and the shop-keepers. This time too, we have managed to release the book safely with no troubles. I am really thankful!

The next volume [Date A live 9] has been planned to be released on December. This book volume will be on sale September so, the pace will be a little faster than usual but, since there is a special edition attached to the BD, I would be in big trouble if I were to be late. My heart has started pumping hard.

Alright, I hope we would be able to meet again.

August 2013 Tachibana Koushi

Translation Notes and References

Chapter 1:

1. ↑ 八= eight. Basically she is frowning her eyebrows
2. ↑ Japanese term for mattress
3. ↑ My lady
4. ↑ imagine Japanese Rock bands with elaborate hairstyles and make-up
5. ↑ Spirit waves
6. ↑ 僕 used here, mainly used for young boys

Chapter 2:

1. ↑ 八= eight. Basically, he frowned his eyebrows
2. ↑ へ. Basically she was unhappy
3. ↑ Spirit Mana
4. ↑ Edward Theodore Gein(1906-1984)- A killer that takes corpses and uses them as human decorations. Further details: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ed_Gein

Chapter 3:

1. ↑ A Japanese way to say I am ready to eat
2. ↑ A Japanese way of saying I am full
3. ↑ Oyakodon usually refers to a rice dish with chicken and egg, but it's also slang for sleeping with a mother and her daughter.

Chapter 4:

1. ↑ It should be Mai but, Since this was the author's mistake/ printing error in the book i will respect that and go with the mistake too.

Chapter 5:

1. ↑ Term for elder sister or elder woman
2. ↑ Small figure, Midget, Tiny